DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 168 RC 017 356

AUTHOR	Arnow, Pat, Ed.
TITLE	Perceptions and Prescriptions in Appalachia.
INSTITUTION	East Tennessee State Univ., Johnson City. Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.
REPORT NO	ISSN-0896-2693
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	45p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Now and Then, CASS, East Tennessee State University, Box 19180A, Johnson City, TN 37614-0002 ($2.50).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Creative Works (Literature,Drama,Fine Arts) (030) -- Historical Materials (060)
JOURNAL CIT	Now and Then; v3 n5 Fall 1988
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Action; Community Programs; Federal Programs; Interviews; Personal Narratives; Poetry; Poverty; Self Help Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Appalachia; Appalachian Literature; Appalachian People; Appalachian Studies; Rural Culture; *War on Poverty

ABSTRACT

This journal theme issue focuses on Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty in Appalachia, launched in 1964. Articles discuss the War on Poverty, the people involved, how it succeeded, and how it ultimately failed. One article examines the role of the Council of the Southern Mountains, established in 1913. Federal officials used the council's reputation to facilitate communications between the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and local Community Action Programs. Council members held OEO at least partly responsible for shortcomings of the anti-poverty effort and found it difficult to square OEO's approach with local realities. During the late 1960s the council underwent radical transformation. Federal relations cooled and money dried up. Since that time, it has been reconstructed and survives as a promoter of ideas and grassroots Appalachian programs. The magazine includes reprinted news articles about the War on Poverty and profiles former council members. A separate article profiles David Whisnant, author and leader of the Appalachian Studies movement. Another profile looks at the life of Sister Marie Ubinger, a worker for social change in Kentucky. "Early Days at Keno" consists of excerpts from the diary kept by novelist Harriette Simpson Arnow when she taught in Appalachian Kentucky in 1939. Another reminiscence reflects on government notions of proper nutrition for schoolchildren during the past few decades. The document also includes poetry, music, three book reviews, and excerpts from a play about conditions in mining communities during the early 1930s. (TES)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

NOW AND THEN

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services/Institute for Appalachian Affairs
East Tennessee State University

ED335168

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

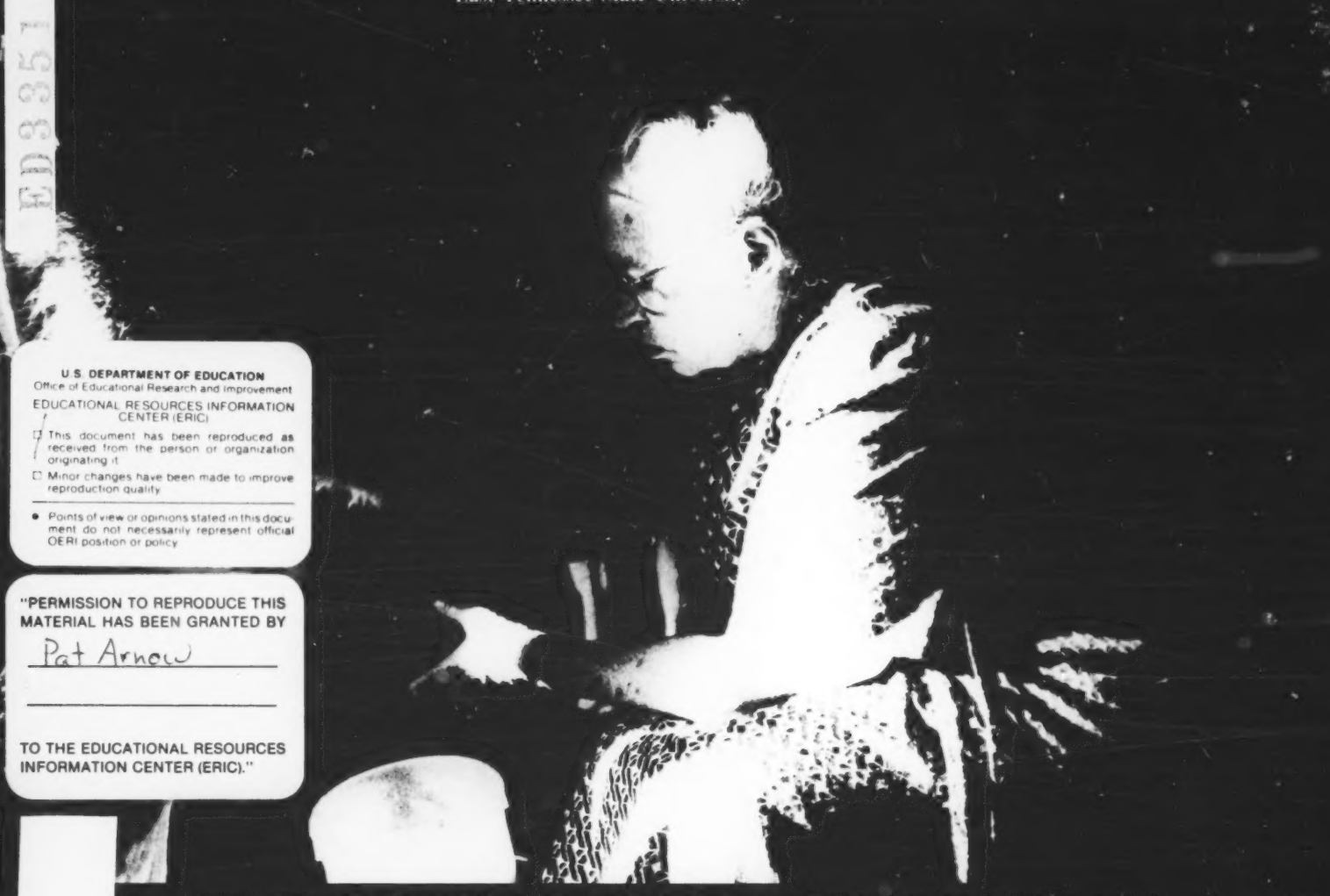
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Pat Arnow

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



…n to growing produce and tending to chickens, 77-year old Bertha Jones, wife of basketmaker Jesse Jones, cares for …'s milk cows and does all the dairy processing. A resident of Scott County, Va., she makes sweet and butter milk, …eese, butter, cream and sour cream.

RC 017356

Perceptions and Prescriptions in Appalachia

with David Whisnant, Loyal Jones, Denise Giardina and a special section on the War on Poverty in Appalachia by John Glen

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

$2.50

And a glowing future

Photo this page
by James Arwood

Photos of Bertha Jones
on front and back cover
by Kenneth Murray

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Volume 5, Number 3
Fall, 1988

Editorial Board
Bert Allen, Ed Cabbell, Pauline Cheek, Mary Chiltoskey, Robert J. Higgs, Marat Moore, Rita Quillen, Fred Waage

Staff
Director-Richard Blaustein
Editor-Pat Arnow
Poetry Editor-Jo Carson
Music Editor-Ed Snodderly
Associate Editor-Jane Woodside
Subscriptions-Ruth Hausman
Support Staff-Carolyn Cerrito, Charles Moore, Becky Satterfield, Margaret Liu, Cathy Whaley, John Rambo

Now and Then Magazine

Now and Then has been published three times a year since 1984 by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (CASS), at East Tennessee State University. CASS is one of the state of Tennessee's centers for excellence, supporting artistic, scholarly and public service projects in the region. Subscriptions are $7.50 per year, $10.00 for institutions and libraries.

Submissions of poetry, fiction, articles, personal essays, graphics and photographs concerned with Appalachian life past and present are welcomed if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Address correspondence to: Editor, **Now and Then,** Box 19180A, ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37614-0002.

East Tennessee State University is fully in accord with the belief that educational and employment opportunities should be available to all eligible persons without regard to age, sex, race, religion, national origin or handicap.

The views expressed in these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent opinions of East Tennessee State University or of the State Board of Regents.

© Copyright by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, 1988.
ISSN No. 0896-2693

SBR No. 260-020-88. 1.6 M copies. Printed by B&B, 1706 W. State St. Bristol, TN 37620.

CONTENTS

• Special feature •

THE WAR ON POVERTY IN APPALACHIA 4
The Council and the War
John Glen looks at a noble casualty, The Council of the Southern Mountains.
Loyal Jones and the Council
Pat Arnow talks with one who was at the center of the action.
The Newspapers and the War
Did anybody really know what happened?
Where Are They Now?
Robert Gipe finds the veterans of a lost cause.

INTERVIEWS
David Whisnant: Born-Again Appalachian
Jane Woodside.....13
Marie Ubinger: Evangalized by the Poor
Tim Boudreau.....18

POETRY
The Hillbilly Vampire
Amy Tipton Gray..... 2
I'm Just Talkin'
Eleanor Brownfield.....17
Strawberry Flats
Walter Darrell Haden.....19
Letter to Hong Kong From My 8th-Grade Latin Teacher in Alabama, 36 Years Later and When I Had Done It
Louie Crew.....22
The Graveyard of Trees
Malcolm Glass 41

PLAY
Preacher With a Horse to Ride (an excerpt)
Jo Carson.....24

DIARY
Early Days at Keno (an excerpt)
Harriette Arnow.....28

STORY
A Lesson in Commodities
Dot Jackson.....31

REVIEWS
Highlander: No Ordinary School
John M. Glen
Guy L. Osborne.....33
Crum
Lee Maynard
Denise Giardina.....35

Brier, His Book *and* **His First, Best Country**
Jim Wayne Miller
Pat Verhultst.....35

Old South, New South
Gavin Wright
Larry D. Gossett.....37

Feud: Hatfields, McCoys and Social Change in Appalachia
Altina L. Waller
Richard Blaustein.....38

These Are Our Voices The Story of Oak Ridge
edited by James Overholt
Charles Moore.....39

MUSIC
The More Things Change
Larry Bledsoe..... 40

Above and beyond
Special thanks for help on this issue—
- *Tim White, White Advertising*
- *Shannon Wilson, Berea College Archives*
- *Milt Ready, Southern Highlands Research Center*
- *Tom Haas and Kate Black, University of Kentucky Special Collections*
- *Sonja Cantrell, ETSU Computer Services*
- *Sean O'Dell, Caber Systems.*

And More Thanks
To our subscribers who completed our marketing survey. It was a great help in planning the future of ***Now and Then.***

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

From the Director

For more than 130 years, the Southern Appalachians have been perceived as a land apart from the mainstream of American civilization. In consequence, its people have been the object of missionary and philanthropic efforts ranging from the establishment of settlement schools and clinics to the declaration of the War on Poverty and the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission in the 1960s.

Social activists of various persuasions have taken up the Appalachian cause as their own, prescribing solutions to problems which have proven to be as complex and stubborn as the people of Appalachia themselves. Sometimes the alliances between concerned natives and enthusiastic newcomers to the region have resulted in genuine improvements in the quality of life. In all too many other cases, idealism has given away to frustration, bitterness and recrimination. Tension and conflict between insiders and outsiders, between labor unionists and industrialists, between advocates of cultural preservation and partisans of radical social and economic reform, are still part of the dialectic of the Appalachian Studies movement.

We have attempted to present in the magazine the complex, stubborn realities which persist regardless of the shifting priorities of policy makers, philanthropists and scholars. Despite all that concerned insiders and outsiders have done to ameliorate the region's problems, a legacy of shame, anger, violence, deprecation and contentiousness refuses to be dispelled. Rather than ignore these uncomfortable realities, we have tried to illuminate this history in a balanced manner, recognizing that the values and beliefs which shape our perceptions largely determine the prescriptions through which we attempt to bring the world as it is closer to our vision of how we believe it ought to be.

During the past five years, though there have been frustrations, conflicts and setbacks along the way, the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services has grown from a promising possibility into a dynamic, positive actuality. In July of this year, the Tennessee Higher Education and the Tennessee Board of Regents officially declared CASS an Accomplished Center of Excellence, confirming the fact that we have succeeded in fullfilling the various goals and objectives we have set for ourselves.

Over the next five years, we will continue to devote ourselves to studying and documenting the social and cultural history of this region in a variety of ways, including the publication of this magazine. While we can't guarantee that our readers will always agree with the ideas we present, we do promise that we will continue to explode stereotyped and outmoded perceptions of Appalachia and to showcase the work of some of the region's most talented writers and artists.

To continue doing this, we need your support. Individuals subscriptions to *Now and Then* are $7.50 for three issues per year; $10.00 for institutional subscribers such as schools and libraries. Larger gifts and donations will be greatly appreciated and will help support the work of the CASS Fellowship Program. Let us hear from you soon. Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a bountiful new year.

--Richard Blaustein

From the Editor

In our summer issue, "Insiders/Outsiders," we asked people if they felt at home here. Did Appalachia provide a comfortable niche or was it an alien world? What was it like to be a Jewish Appalachian? An Italian Appalachian? Did those whose families had come here generations ago feel at home? Some of the most interesting writing we have seen came into our office on the issue.

We knew that once we brought up the subject, there was going to be a lot to say. We planned another issue to explore the territory in a deeper and wider sense, to talk about the "insiderness" or "outsiderness" of the movements and institutions that have become a part of Appalachian life.

A piece of the region's recent history, the War on Poverty, became the focal point for our "Perceptions and Prescriptions issue. We talked to movers and shakers such as David Whisnant and Loyal Jones. We also talked to a contemporary missionary. Over the years, these people had come to appreciate more and more the complexity of the problems facing Appalachia. The region and its people are tied up for better or worse with the larger world's economics, culture and politics. What they offered us were some thoughtful discussions. But unlike political candidates, the people we talked to didn't have any simple answers.

What we offer in these pages, then, are the words of some thoughtful people who aren't about to tell us what to do. They will grant us that the problems are complicated. Also, we've compiled some stories, poems, music and photos. These show a nice range of perceptions—but our contributors would be quick to tell us that there's plenty more to consider. So we give you the tip of an iceberg—or to use a more aptly Appalachian metaphor—a pebble in Watauga dam, a power line over one mountain, one patch in the quilt, one blossom on the laurel.

—Pat Arnow

The Hillbilly Vampire

Many people
are confused about hillbilly vampires.

They think
a hillbilly vampire should look like
George Jones in a cape
or Ricky Skaggs with fangs
or Lyle Lovett, period.

They think
the hillbilly part comes first—
the feeder, not the fed upon.

For they do not understand
that this
like just about everything else
is an outside industry
come down to the hills in the dark
for raw material.

—Amy Tipton Gray

Amy Tipton Gray teaches the History of Country music at Caldwell Community College in Hudson, N.C.

From the Archives

Through the years people living in the Appalachian Mountains have been perceived as "backward," "haggard" and "gaunt"—worn down by years of poverty. Explanations of why a region rich in natural resources has lagged in economic development have been as varied as the proposed solutions to the region's problems. During the 1960s, in an atmosphere of social change created by President John F. Kennedy's call for social action and President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, many organizations were created to improve life in Appalachia.

One major group of records held by the Archives of Appalachia, the Congress of Appalachian Development/Gordon Ebersole Collection, documents the "perceptions" and the "prescriptions" for change advanced by the Congress and by numerous other activist organizations. In a report sent to Ebersole, Father Ralph W. Beiting described the conditions in Eastern Kentucky:

"Destitution (a step below poverty) haunts every valley. Unemployment and often unemployable men sit on too many rickety porches whittling countless curls from cedar sticks. Hunger strikes at the majority of families....Sickness, the natural successor to hunger, is literally sucking the life out of a once great people."

In reaction to this situation, Beiting's Christian Appalachian Project purchased 400 acres of land to organize a series of specialized farms which would operate as a cooperative. The organization was also active in the development of community facilities, scholarships for the youth and woodworking and/or concrete products enterprises.

The collection also includes information on such groups as the Council of the Southern Mountains, the Appalachian Volunteers, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia and Highlander Center.

The Archives also holds papers of two individuals active in the Congress of Appalachian Development and other self-help organizations. Paul J. Kaufman served as a state senator in West Virginia and executive director of the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund. Included in his papers are speeches relating to conditions in West Virginia, proposals for the future of the region and legal documents from cases involving the Congress.

The Richard C. Austin Papers consist of a manuscript which chronicles the creation and demise of the Congress for Appalachian Development. Austin was the director of the West Virginia Mountain Project, United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

The Model Valley Corporation Collection contains information on the corporation's efforts to improve housing, education and job opportunities for people living in portions of Claiborne and Campbell Counties, Tenn., and Bell and Whitley Counties, Ky.

Another collection, Human Economic Appalachian Development Corporation (HEAD), includes publicity materials about special projects and descriptions of the structure of the corporation.

The First Tennessee-Virginia Development District Records contain minutes, administrative files and publications from 1965 to 1980. This organization promoted cooperation among local governments, gathered research data on communities, coordinated federal assistance programs, and encouraged regional planning in Upper East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

The records of the Council on Appalachian Women reflect the organization's concern for the needs of women in education and social services as well as its efforts to document women's issues. The records include information on battered women, abortion, legal rights, health care, education, day care and employment.

The Archives of Appalachia seeks to collect and preserve records pertaining to the political, social, economic and cultural development of the Southern mountains. Of special interest to us are those grassroots and self-help organizations which have labored long and hard for the betterment of life in the Appalachian Mountains. For more information about our collections or the donation of manuscripts contact Archives of Appalachia, Box 22,450A, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 37614, telephone (615) 929-4338.

—Norma Myers Thomas and
Marie Tedesco

From the Museum

Perhaps those of us who have lived in this region since birth have more clearly defined prescriptions than those who have moved in from other places. Each of us has his or her own particular history, and our perceptions are colored uniquely.

Since joining the staff of the Carroll Reece Museum almost 16 years ago, my perceptions of the region have shifted dramatically. I have the unique position of putting some of my prescriptions into action. It has been a joy to move an entire program, the appearance of the facility, a group of people, to effect changes which one's dreams have fashioned. Fortunately, the Reece staff perceives and prescribes much as I do and our "machine" hums along in a well-oiled manner.

Perhaps Dr. C.C. Sherrod perceived a museum on the campus of East Tennessee State Teacher's College as a prescription, not only for the students enrolled, but also for the teachers of the region. During his presidency, and through his tireless efforts, the college birthed what would become the Carroll Reece Museum.

Since its inception in 1931, many of the contributors to the Reece collections have seen their contributions as movements to preserve their heritages; and so they do.

Our patrons are continually rediscovering the Reece gold mine and, through their presence and their comments, energize our creativity, our imagination and our enthusiasm. Our staff takes on the role of the missionary, the explorer, the revivalist, not only to those who reach out for our services but to each other as well.

The cultural strength of any region becomes a vital weapon in the war on poverty, a crucial instrument to both medical and mental health and an essential tool to higher education. It is one that has been recognized throughout the history of the institution and receives the full support of this university.

Dr. Sherrod surely realized that his museum would survive and grow and become a fundamental part of this region. He was a visionary who would be proud, as we are, of what we have become.

—Helen Roseberry

The Council of the Southern Mountains and the War on Poverty

John Glen

*While doing research for his recently published book about a center of mountain activism, (**Highlander, No Ordinary School**, published by University Press of Kentucky and reviewed on page 33.), John Glen realized that no one had explored the impact of the War on Poverty on Appalachia in the 1960s. He found this recent history an important and interesting subject, he set about looking into it. "The Council and the War" is his first foray.*

On a grim December morning in 1965, Edwin J. Safford of the Council of the Southern Mountains was heading northwest on Route 15 from Whitesburg, Ky. As he drove through the fog on the twisting, slippery road, he wondered if his journey was "an allegory of the course of community action in Letcher County." Like the program, the road seemed to be "a writhing ribbon" which "wriggles seemingly on its own accord."

The War on Poverty in Appalachia often stirred such sentiments. Indeed, the antipoverty campaign of the 1960s enlarged, transformed and eventually overwhelmed the Council of the Southern Mountains, leaving in its wake troubling questions about the possibilities and problems of reform in the region.

The original purpose of the Council, established in 1913 as the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers, was to promote the exchange of ideas and methods among those engaged in social, educational or religious work in the area. For nearly 40 years it functioned as a loosely-organized group of field workers, business and professional people, ministers, philanthropists and representatives of church mission boards, settlement schools and private colleges. It held annual conferences, sponsored the magazine *Mountain Life & Work*, worked with benevolent organizations to distribute gifts and services to the poor and created a number of commissions in such areas as health, education, recreation, youth, and spiritual life.

The Council remained a small, financially-strapped organization run by a handful of part-time staff members until Perley F. Ayer became executive secretary in 1951. Ayer, a rural sociologist from New Hampshire who taught at Berea College, was convinced that the Council could best meet the needs of Southern Appalachia by maintaining a strict neutrality, avoiding any identifica-

The Papers and the War

*This article from the **New York Times** October 20, 1963, reportedly helped persuade President John F. Kennedy to include antipoverty measures in his new legislative program..*

Kentucky Miners: A Grim Winter

Poverty, Squalor and Idleness Prevail in Mountain Area

By Homer Bigart

Special to The New York Times

WHITESBURG, Ky., —In the Cumberland Mountains of Eastern Kentucky, tens of thousands of unemployed coal miners and subsistence farmers face another winter of idleness and grinding poverty.

This region was an early victim of automation. Replaced by machines, the miners can find no work. They are forced to live on Government handouts.

Escape to the cities is not easy, for the average miner has no skill for other jobs. He is deficient in education. His native clannishness makes adjustment to urban life painfully difficult.

So the mountains have become a vast ghetto of unemployables...The few tourists who venture into the area seldom see the pinched faces of hungry children, the filth and squalor of cabins, the unpainted shacks that still serve as schoolhouses. These dramatic manifestations of want and government neglect are usually tucked away in narrow valleys, the "hollows," off the main road.

"Sociologists say the welfare system seems deliberately calculated to corrode morale and hasten degeneracy.

"The present system has encouraged the break-up of families," according to Harry M. Caudill, Whitesburg lawyer, whose book, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, has been hailed by critics as a definitive study of the region...

No matter how hungry his wife and children may be, an able-bodied man cannot get on the relief rolls, Mr. Caudill explained. In desperation, the man deserts his family so they can qualify for relief checks and get food.

Mr. Caudill believes only a vast Federal power project similar to the Tennessee Valley Authority, will end poverty.

He stresses the need for Federal control because he fears the continued growth of local political dynasties.

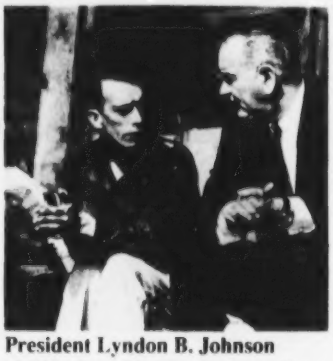
"The massive doling out of Federal welfare money has financed, and now sustains, a dozen or more crafty, amoral, merciless and highly effective countywide political machines," he told a recent meeting of the Council of the Southern Mountains, a philanthropic organization that is undertaking a drive against illiteracy in the mountains.

"They thrive on the present economic malaise and are powerful because the people are helpless.

"The continuance of their influence hinges on the bloated welfare program, and they will oppose by every available means any effort to restore the people to productivity and self-reliance."

Excerpt used by permission. Copyright © The New York Times Company.

tion with a particular political position. The Council could then serve as a forum in which different interests would hammer out a reform strategy based upon a consensus of opinion in the region. Guided by this "partnership" ideal, Ayer built the Council into perhaps the most well-known and influential voice in the southern mountains in the early 1960s, the umbrella group for what one Council board member called a "neat confederation of liberal regional leadership."



Reprinted with permission from The Courier-Journal

President Lyndon B. Johnson visiting Tom Fletcher in Inez, Ky., in 1964. It was here that Johnson launched the War on Poverty.

This picture of orderly reform changed dramatically after President Lyndon B. Johnson declared war on poverty in the spring of 1964. Federal officials believed that the Council's reputation and connections could be used to facilitate communication between the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the agency created to administer the overall antipoverty campaign, and local Community Action Programs, which would assist residents in designing and carrying out initiatives in Appalachia. Within two years after the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 the Council had grown to an organization with more than 40 full-time staff members with an annual budget of over $1 million.

Council programs expanded rapidly. The most publicized program was the Appalachian Volunteers. The volunteers were college students who refurbished Eastern Kentucky's one- and two-room schoolhouses and aided curriculum, recreation and library enrichment efforts. The Council's Community Action Technicians fanned across the mountains to organize and advise Community Action Agencies. A Talent Bank recruited individuals for placement in Community Action Programs, hospitals, schools and other institutions.

The Council also developed an on-the-job training program for the U.S. Department of Labor and ran orientation sessions for Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). A truly effective War on Poverty in Appalachia, Ayer asserted, should reflect the Council's "partnership methodolgy which involves *all segments* of society: public *and* private; dominant *and* dependent; educated, undereducated, *and* uneducated; affluent and satisfied as well as the poor."

What the Council staff and Appalachian Volunteers encountered in the counties where they worked, however, raised serious questions about the Council's partnership ideal and the War on Poverty itself, particularly its well-publicized "maximum feasible participation" of the poor in Community Action Programs. There were some signs of progress: road and school improvement projects in Whitley County, Ky.; community centers providing health, education and other services in McDowell County, W.Va.; a comprehensive survey of poverty, a home repair program and a campaign for hot lunches for schoolchildren in Mingo County, W.Va. But field reports in 1965 and 1966 increasingly suggested, as Council staff member Tom Davis wrote, that while Appalachian residents and reformers were seeing the problems more sharply than ever before, "the solutions seem much further away."

One case where "maximum feasible participation" of the poor never got off the ground was in Perry County, Ky. In a

Berea College Archives.

Perley Ayer recruiting students for Berea College in the 1950s.

Loyal Jones and the Council

Pat Arnow

Loyal Jones, who directed the Council of the Southern Mountains through its most tumultuous years, agreed to talk about those times. After reading a draft of John Glen's article, he spoke on the phone to me from his home in Berea, Ky. Since 1970, when he left the Council, Jones has been directing the Appalachian Center at Berea College. Last year he was elected president of the Appalachian Studies Association.

First he wanted to make it clear that Perley Ayer was not "strictly neutral":

I objected to that particular term. Perley was known here as a person of great moral courage. When he worked for Berea College, he was always raising issues in the faculty about Berea's service to disadvantaged people. He was always recruiting students that he said truly needed an education, arguing on their behalf, and that educational institutions tended to want to find students who already had an education and take them rather than the ones that truly needed it.

I think he was a person from another era who believed in human development and human potential, that by getting a wide diversity of people together and thrashing out problems you could arrive at a better solution. That was his approach to things, rather than the confrontational approach that grew in popularity during the '60s and '70s.

Q: ***How did you first learn of the Council?***

A: *I was a student at Berea College from 1950 to 1954, and the Council was just a weak little organization. Of course it had been going since 19 and 13. Perley Ayer had come here in 1947 to teach at Berea College. They had more or less expected him to bury the Council, which had seemed to live beyond the missionary era that had spawned it. Perley was a vigorous worker, and inspiring, and he could be*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Papers . . .

From the Louisville Courier-Journal editorial page March 19, 1964.

Volunteers are a Bargain Dollars or in People

For collegians, weekends are usually time for relaxing. But during the past winter hundreds of Kentucky college people have been putting their weekends to extraordinary use, taking part in an organization called Appalachian Volunteers. The volunteers are a sort of amateur, part-time, unpaid domestic Peace Corps. They operate, on their off days, in the more depressed counties of Eastern Kentucky, helping to rebuild and improve homes and school buildings. And they are by any standard a tremendous success.

Indeed, everyone who watches the students in action is impressed by four aspects of their operation: The gratitude of the people helped, the students' feeling of satisfaction and their desire to return, the tremendous amount of work done per dollar spent, and the ease with which the Volunteers could be fitted into a domestic Peace Corps if and when one is organized to help in President Johnson's war on poverty...

Excerpt used by permission.

report to the Council the Community Action Program director admitted that he "failed to see the necessity, at first, of establishing a link between the poor and our staff and other local resources."

Even when the director became convinced of the necessity of involving the poor, his attempts to do so were ineffectual at best. Poor people, if they were involved in the Community Action Program at all, were merely tokens. Council staffer Earl M. Redwine attended three community meetings and saw "folks from the hollows" at only one of them. As far as he could see, "No attempt was made to draw them into the process of the community decision making." When questioned about this lack of participation, county leaders replied, according to Redwine's report, that the poor "aren't interested, they're lazy, or not smart enough, or don't know what's best for themselves."

According to Redwine, the poor weren't uninterested, lazy or dimwitted. They were disillusioned. When the Community Action Program failed to produce any tangible results, community groups lost interest. To many Perry Countians, the War on Poverty had simply become what Redwine termed "the Christmas basket-for-the-poor charity worker's paradise."

Even in those areas where the poor became part of the decision-making process, the broad-based coalition envisioned by policy makers still didn't quite work. For example, in Mingo County, W. Va., as the number of blacks and poor people elected to the board of directors of the Economic Opportunity Commission grew, the participation of the "middle class representatives of public service organizations and professions" declined. Council staffer Safford doubted that the poor were forcing the rich off the board. "Rather, I think the rich don't choose to make the effort to sit down with the poor."

Council staff members held OEO at least partly responsible for these shortcomings. All too often, they reported, local Community Action Agencies were preoccupied with meeting OEO procedures for receiving federal grants instead of organizing communities or exploring possible solutions to poverty. "I know it's impossible for anyone on your staff to shed the mantle of being the man with the money," the Council's Alan Zuckerman told Jack Ciaccio, OEO's district supervisor of Community Action Programs in Kentucky and West Virginia. Still, Zuckerman said, "it would be far better" if someone from the agency came to a meeting in Appalachia "and listened to what the people were saying rather than coming in with preconceived notions and forcing them to come to what he feels is right."

Council workers also found it difficult to square OEO's approach to community action—and the Council's role in implementing it—with the irreconcilable nature of many local conflicts. For example, in Hancock County, Tenn., community action was virtually stymied by an intense rivalry within the dominant local Republican party. The Community Action Program director was the son of the leader of one faction, and neither he nor the head of the other faction, the local school superintendent, would work together on any project. "Almost anything that one side tries to do in this county will automatically be fought by the other side," the director told Tom Davis. "This you can count on."

Jack Ciaccio of the OEO acknowledged that Community Action Agencies

Loyal Jones

very persuasive. He went around and got people interested in it again. The Council was publishing ***Mountain Life and Work*** *out of the main administrative hall here at Berea.*

Q: ***How did you get involved with the Council yourself?***

A: *I spent a great deal of time in the Mountain Room reading. I was always interested in the mountains. I came from the mountains of North Carolina. I read a lot of* ***Mountain Life and Work*** *and got acquainted with Perley Ayer. He was then teaching agriculture in the foundation school, which was a high school. Later on, when I graduated, he came and said, "How would you like to be a roving ambassador for the Council, selling subscriptions to* ***Mountain Life and Work*** *and memberships in the Council?" But I got drafted so I went off to the Army. It was a good many years later I got out of the Army and went to graduate school at the University of North Carolina and got a teacher's certificate. I was teaching school in Jefferson County, Ky., and Perley came by to see me and said he was going to take a leave of absence to study rural sociology at Ohio State, and he needed somebody to run the Council for a year. That was in '58. I had intended to be a schoolteacher. But I moved to Berea and did that for a year, and when he came back he said, "I'd like you to stay on." He was the executive director and I became the associate executive director.*

There was this little staff that grew. We got some money from the Ford Foundation even before the War on Poverty to do some things on education. We had a health worker. We had an economic development advisor. Then we got the manpower development program, working on getting job training. We worked with Iron Mountain Stoneware to hire and train their workers.

It didn't grow much until the early 1960s. When the War on Poverty came in 1965, it blossomed all at once.

Then the whole political climate changed from one of cooperation to one more interested in confronting an establishment that wasn't doing a very good job of running schools or welfare.

were often governed by representatives of public and private agencies whose resources were needed for fledgling anti-poverty programs but whose interests were "identical with the power structure" or controlled by it. Thus if the War on Poverty was to be more than "just a series of political plums for the local power structures," the poor would have to be mobilized to "protest—*long and loud*—about the lousy job that is being done."

Such a policy was impossible in a place like Kentucky's Letcher County, Edwin Safford replied. By insisting on the involvement of locally powerful groups, OEO had "literally run interference for the very interests that would stifle a truly spontaneous Community Action Program." It was at best politically naive to assume that creating a broadly-based Community Action Program would erase "age-old rifts" and pull together "people who have angrily opposed each other for years."

By early 1966, Safford pointed out, community action in Appalachia was already a battlefield "littered with the remains of grandiose schemes" thought up by government planners who were enchanted with terms like "coordination" and "mobilization of resources" and sought to apply them to a region where coordination was "no more easily come by than it is in Washington, and where mobilization of resources means hiring your relatives."

Clearly the War on Poverty had exposed deep-seated problems that could not be easily resolved through the Council's traditional emphasis on cooperation and non-controversial service. Tensions within the Council increased as staff members and Appalachian Volunteers argued that Appalachian communities, and especially the poor, must be organized to pursue their own needs and challenge the power of established institutions and groups. The first of several confrontations over this issue erupted in 1966. Perley Ayer demanded that the Appalachian Volunteers give their primary allegiance to the Council and its partnership approach. The volunteers refused, resigned as a body under the leadership of Milton Ogle, and formed a new organization independent of the Council.

The Appalachian Volunteers went on to spearhead a number of aggressive and highly successful community organizing campaigns in the coal counties of Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia. In the Mountain State's Raleigh County, for example, the young volunteers engineered a reorganization of the Community Action Program by packing its monthly meetings with more than 200 poor people who elected a new staff and board of directors and formed committees to work on education, health, road, water and other local problems. "The spirit of Community Action was stirring in their veins," proclaimed Chester Workman, the new

Council of the Southern Mountains Records, Southern Appalachian Archives, Berea College.

Council of the Southern Mountains staff in the mid-1960s. First row (l. to r.): Milton Ogle, Eleanor Ball, Verdelle Vaughn, Martha Abney, Loyal Jones, P.F. Ayer, Ann Pollard, Bill Suters, Dorothy Crandall, Mace Crandall. 2nd row: Isaac Vanderpool, Wanda Farley, Vivian Fish, Tom Parrish, Jim Templeton, Ann Floyd, Nancy Graham, Judy Trout, Nine Worley. 3rd row: Dave Lollis, Gibbs Kinderman, Sylvia Forte, Tom Rodenbaugh, Jim Blair, Jean Moister, H.J. Holmes, Sue Giffin, Maureen Stoy. 4th row: Julian Mosley, J.H.T. Sutherland, McArthur Watts, Roselea Johnston, Dorothy Haddix, Diana Bayne, Pauline Smith, Jane Harold.

Loyal Jones

Perley Ayer was getting along in years. He also was, in part of those years, debilitated by this disease which eventually killed him. There came all kinds of conflicts. On the part of the young and new staff there was the desire to move Perley off, and there were some talks about having the board retire Perley. Some of us felt that was going too far. Part of the staff, I included, supported Perley in separating the Appalachian Volunteers from the Council. The Appalachian Volunteers' method of operation was so different from the philosophical direction of the Council that they really ought to have been on their own. But OEO did not want them on their own. They wanted the stability of this old organization. OEO was largely responsible for the acrimoniousness.

A lot of us were not necessarily 100 percent in agreement with Perley Ayer's views of things. But there were some personal loyalties involved, and I think we could see some limitations in the way the younger staff could go about reshaping the system. The government is not long going to support an insurrection against it.

What the Appalachian Volunteers were doing in West Virginia—bringing pressure to school boards, principals and superintendents to do a better job, organizing against strip mining—these things were justified, I think. Whether or not they were politically wise in the way they went about it is another question, but there was no question that these were idealistic young people.

There was lots of local support for the Appalachian Volunteers among the poor people, the people who had suffered under that government. Of course there were a lot of people at the county seat level who were greatly opposed, and some community people who had a vested interest. Governor Smith of West Virginia really went all out to get the money cut off.

Many of the young poverty fighters tended to be doing this as a one or two year commitment before they went to graduate school or went back to their papa's business. They sometimes got things stirred up and then weren't there to help work it out.

I would hasten to say a lot of those

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

president of the agency. "They wanted action, and action they got."

But the volunteers would come under fire from county and state officials in Kentucky and West Virginia for their involvement in controversies over strip mining, political corruption and fraudulent welfare practices; the attacks aggravated internal differences over strategies and objectives. The group eventually lost their Federal support and ceased operations in 1971.

The departure of the Appalachian Volunteers and the increasingly critical view of staff members toward the anti-poverty campaign placed the Council in a precarious position. Some members drifted away, impatient with the Council's refusal to confront the basic questions about the sources of poverty in Appalachia and the Johnson Administration's escalating involvement in the war in Vietnam at the expense of the War on Poverty.

Other members, such as Council president Philip H. Young, tried to reform the Council from within. Young, along with a number of board and staff members, realized that the concerns of the Council had changed but Perley Ayer had not. "The time has come to consider new avenues of operation," Young contended, and in late 1966, the executive committee created a new position for Ayer that relieved him of administrative duties and named Loyal Jones as executive director.

Jones, a North Carolina native and Berea College graduate who had been a full-time staff member since 1958, recognized the need to make the Council a more "inclusive" organization acting "as an advocate for people who need help." He seemed more aware than Ayer had been that the Council had not done enough to attract the poor and working people, and he was more open to the idea that "protest serves a useful purpose in calling attention to long-standing injustices." Yet he retained he predecessor's commitment to the partnership ideal: "At some point, we must come together as a group of human beings who all suffer and who all want things to be different, if we are to bring about a society in which we all want to live."

Even with Jones as director, it was becoming less and less possible for the Council to accommodate both conflict and consensus. Young people and poor people's groups wanted greater representation on the board of directors and more specific, concerted action. Debates at annual conferences intensified.

In 1967, Gordon Ebersole of the Congress for Appalachian Development called on the Council to adopt a resolution asking private power companies to change voluntarily into non-profit corporations. The Council did not act on the resolution, fearing that such political advocacy would threaten its tax-exempt status. But in 1968 the Council voted to "endorse and support" the Poor People's Campaign sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This led board member Oliver Terriberry to charge that the Council was sanctioning the activities of a group whose approach bordered on "coercion, intimidation, and in some instances, almost anarchy."

The pressures that had been building since the beginning of the War on Poverty finally boiled over in 1969. Nearly a thousand people from over a dozen states came to the Council's annual conference at Fontana Lake, N.C., in April 1969. After passing a hotly-contested resolution to allow everyone attending the Council's business meetings to vote, whether or not they were paid members, conference par-

The Papers . . .

From ***The Lexington Leader****, Lexington, Ky., August 23, 1966.*

Funds Being Misused, Antipoverty Workers Tell Federal Officials

WASHINGTON (AP)—More than 300 antipoverty workers who came to Washington at their own expense to talk with federal officials about Appalachian programs wound up in a gripe session.

The workers, from Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee and Virginia, charged that federal funds are being mishandled at the local level.

Hobart Grills, Evarts, Ky., like most of those who spoke at the evening session, said the Appalachian programs are basically good, but added:

"The AV's (Appalachian Volunteers) and the VISTAs have been the first ones to do anything for us. But even they have problems. They're sent in like soldiers without weapons.

"What the federal government does is to give all the money to the enemy—those courthouse politicians."

Used by permission.

Loyal Jones

people did stay in the mountains. Then there were a lot who were local. One of the things I was interested in when I was director of the Council was to try to balance the staff. I tried to have maybe half native born, and since there were so many young idealistic people from everywhere, well-educated, certainly wanting to do things, we hired probably about 50 percent from elsewhere. I think it made a nice mix.

I do maintain the the Council was one fo the most democratic organizations in the country along around 1967, '68, '69. There was this concerted effort to broaden its face and include community people and poor people.

But I tried to get the board to decide what it was the Council was supposed to be. I was unable to do that because the board was divided. I decided to quit.

Q: ***How were the times different than they are now?***

A: *It was an era of zeal. People were trying to do something about the problems in this country. It was a wonderful time in many ways. Everybody felt pretty heady about finally being able to do something about these problems. We didn't do all that should have been done but I think a lot of advances were made.*

A lot of local people were awakened to the possibilities. They still are working, all these community groups, people who know how to go down to the state capital and get some action when the local officials won't pay much attention to them . The War on Poverty did a whole lot of good in the way of opening up possiblities.

We've had these great periods of missionary zeal. We've sent missionaries over the world and put them into the Southern mountains and put them on Indian reservations. These people were on fire to do good. Sometimes they may have done as much harm as they did good, but there was that desire to help, and that was very wholesome and good. Hospitals and clinics were founded. That whole era after the Civil War, the first part of the 20th century, literally hundreds of settlement schools and religious schools and hospitals were founded down here because Christian people elsewhere thought,

ticipants voted to establish new commissions on Black Appalachians, Poor People's Self-Help, Aging and Natural Resources.

They then adopted a new set of by-laws providing that Council board members would be elected directly by the commissions and that within three years 51 percent of the board would be representatives of the poor. Several explicitly political resolutions also passed, demanding among other things a guaranteed annual income, an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam and the re-channeling of military spending into domestic programs, particularly in Appalachia.

"Some force exploded the Council of the Southern Mountains," board members Charles Counts mused, "and I wonder how the pieces can be gathered." Members like Philip Young bravely welcomed the "fresh opportunity to deal with old problems" and cheered the "new look" of the Council—"Who says you can't put new wine in old bottles?" Myles Horton of the Highlander Research and Education Center exulted.

But others like former Council president Donald R. Fessler saw the Fontana meeting as a conspiratorial "takeover," and West Virginia University provost Robert F. Munn condemned the actions of "those who view reason, moderation and good faith with contempt." Fearing the loss of both members and financial support, the board made Council membership open to anyone who subscribed to its purposes and who either participated in or contributed to its work, but limited voting privileges at annual conferences to those who were registered as members for at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

This decision was promptly rescinded at the Council's 1970 meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C. By this time the passage of militant resolutions calling for community control of OEO programs, the abolition of strip mining and "an economic analysis that details who 'owns' Appalachia" was hardly surprising. And late in the afternoon on the final day of the conference, after most participants had left, the Youth Commission orchestrated the adoption of a resolution that made the "defined operational goal" of the Council the "democratic public control of Appalachia's natural resources, basic energy development and transportation."

R. Baldwin Lloyd of the Council's board sympathetically explained that the Youth Commission wanted the resolution to be regarded as an "educational tool" to stimulate serious discussion among Council members about "the economic needs and problems that face Appalachia." Lloyd conceded, however, that many members saw the resolution as a policy decision forcing the Council "to take a socialistic, if not even a communistic, stand." More resignations followed.

The net effect of the Fontana and Lake Junaluska meetings was to make it extremely difficult not only to maintain the Council as an organization but to preserve whatever role it still had in a rapidly deteriorating War on Poverty. The Nixon Administration took a decidely cool attitude toward the antipoverty program, and OEO channeled Appalachian antipoverty grants through private businesses, political establishments, and consulting firms rather than groups like the Council.

In May 1970 Loyal Jones presented the board of commissioners with what he considered to be "three crises" facing the Council: a lack of money, a conflict over

The Papers . . .

From the Louisville Courier-Journal, September 3, 1967.

Poverty an Old Story to Mountain Council

by Kyle Vance

Berea, Ky.,—...the Council of the Southern Mountains' open-door policies sometimes subject it to angry criticism. An expression of policy states that it "rejects no group simply because that group has critics." As a result, the talent bank and other programs have brought into the mountains a few of what (Loyal) Jones describes as "real characters." They include leftists with strong views against how things are run in Washington.

Paul Goodman, New York author and self-styled anarchist, was the council's key speaker at the recent Knoxville conference. Among other things, he called for support of draft-card burners, and damned the Great Society as the "worst society."

"We like to have the thoughts of all," said director Loyal Jones. "We took a lot of flak from the Goodman talk, but you will have to agree that we let Bill Sturgill defend strip mining on the same program."

William B. Sturgill is head of Kentucky River Coal Sales, Hazard, Ky., one of the larger strip-mine operations...

Used by permission.

Loyal Jones

"we've just got to do something about the less fortunate."

These feelings ebb and flow. Most of us grow faint and get cynical, and say it doesn't make much difference. But I think we're on the verge of another liberal swing.

Q: *It would be difficult to get people so involved like that now, wouldn't it?*

A: *The Appalachian Studies Conference does this to some extent. It's mostly an organization of scholarly folks from universities. Here again you have an establishment organization trying to reach out to other people, and that's not always entirely successful. The whole business of getting groups together to discuss problems, to do better by someone else, has its limitations. People are not going to give up very much power if they are in control of things—just as the federal government in the War on Poverty was not willing to allow people to go too far, as with the case of the Appalachian Volunteers. The volunteers upset things pretty well, and their funds were cut off.*

Q: *The Council seems to have been in a decline through the '70s and '80s.*

A: *It's a pity. The people who took over the Council had access to money and a modicum of power, but so much depends on people's perceptions. I think in those years, people at the new Council alienated some of the people who had been giving, as if they were bad people just because they had money to give.*

There've been wonderful people at the Council during these years. I know they want to do a lot of things, and they have done a lot of things in mine safety, bringing suits, strip mining, welfare rights, citizen's groups, citizens for social and economic justice, groups they had organized. But unfortunately, the foundations, even those liberal foundations, are just as fickle as they can be.

The Ford Foundation was quite interested in supporting this great commission structure of the Council until the year that the Council fell apart. I think if we had had funds to support that, we would have had a better chance of holding it together, doing something useful, but the Ford

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

management principles and a confusion about purpose and direction. Should it be "a council of persons of diverse viewpoints and economic strata, or a single-purpose or limited-purpose organization reflecting a single ideological viewpoint and a membership limited to those who support the purpose and viewpoint that have been established?" Jones asked. When the board deferred any definite decision on the Council's future, Jones resigned, creating what was widely seen as a fourth crisis for the Council.

For the next few years, the Council struggled to reconstruct an organization that reflected its radical transformation. It was soon apparent that pursing the strategies and ideals of the late 1960s through a decentralized structure without any significant sources of financial backing was a very formidable task. Following Jones's resignation the Council board formed a temporary triumvirate composed of a new executive director, Warren Wright, and two staff members, Julian Griggs and Issac Vanderpool. Wright, a Letcher County farmer and self-educated minister who had seen his land ravaged by corporate strip mining, envisioned a Council of independent commissions through which Appalachian people could end the region's colonial status and assert control over its politics, welfare programs, educational system and tax structure.

Implementing these plans was another matter. OEO funds had disappeared, and the Council was back to supporting itself with membership fees, church and private foundation grants, and volunteer labor. The number of staff members dwindled to fewer than a dozen. Wright's strong administrative style and focus on the strip-mining issues clashed with the desire for a democratized staff working on several fronts. In 1971 Wright stepped down as executive director, and the staff attempted to operate the Council on a completely egalitarian basis. One year later, the Council moved its office from Berea to Clintwood, Va., located in the heart of the central Appalachian coalfields, where it could be physically close to the core problems of the region.

The Council survived—but just barely. Since the mid-1970s, it has maintained an active interest in the fight against strip mining, insensitive health and welfare systems, and inequities in the coal and textile industries. But the Council is far from fulfilling its hopes for a broad-based membership, helping to link together community groups in a coalition capable of stopping the exploitation of Appalachia and giving power to its people. Ironically, the Council's primary function once again has become the recognition and promotion of ideas and programs among grassroots organizations in the region.

The history of the Council of Southern Mountains offers several insights into the dynamics of reform in Appalachia. For more than half a century, the Council tended to romanticize Appalachian life and culture, to smooth over the destructive effects of industrialization on the region, to be more concerned with the symptoms of problems than their root causes and to operate within ideological boundaries which it defined as neutrality but which also confined it to gradual, limited and piecemeal reforms.

All this changed with the War on Poverty. The size and scope of its programs, the issues it raised and the conflicts it sparked buffeted the organization. It became torn about the effectiveness of the antipoverty campaign, reluctant to confront partisan issues and insistent that compromise was always possible. The Council that emerged in the 1970s may have been more attuned to the need for a tough-minded analysis of the economic and political realities of Appalachia. But the new Council possessed its own romantic predispositions and found it hard to sustain itself when few supported,

Berea College Archives

Loyal Jones teaching at Berea College around 1971.

Loyal Jones

Foundation lost interest in it when they saw that there was some discord.

Lots of these foundations have supported lots of liberal causes there for a few years and then they find something else to do.

The Council deserves support and they're doing a lot of things that need support. They really are representing a lot of grassroots people that don't have anything else in the way of a regional organization. Yet most foundations have not shown that they're willing to support that very well and I think that's a shame.

The ones who are trying to hold the Council together have had a lot of financial problems. They have to deal with those rather than programs. It's bad.

Q: *Have you stayed involved with the Council?*

A: *I've stayed as a member, a subscriber, I get the magazine.*

Q: *What did you do after you quit your job with the Council?*

A: *I was offered a job at Berea College. There had been talk at Berea of founding an Appalachian Center that would pull together various academic departments and coordinate and direct the commitment of the college toward the region. Eighty percent of our students come from the region. We have always been interested. So I went to work for the college at that time. I run the Center but I also teach a couple of courses—Appalachian culture and Appalachian problems. And I run summer courses for teachers and educators.*

Q: *Do you think the region is better off now than before the War on Poverty?*

A: *I really think it is, partially because of the programs passed during the Kennedy/Johnson years. I don't really believe that there's wholesale hunger now. The Food Stamp program has done a good job in trying to feed people who would not have an adequate diet. A lot of people who are disabled have support. Welfare for most of the states is not enough to live on. It's a percentage of what it would take to live decently. The employment situation is not good, and a lot of the jobs that have come in are minimum wage. We've*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

much less understood, its politicized agenda.

For many Appalachian residents, the most lasting positive effect of the War on Poverty may have been the awakening of an indigenous grassroots reform movement in the 1970s. The welfare rights, labor, health, education, environmental, cooperative and political action groups that grew out of the antipoverty campaign seemed to reflect an understanding that community action, though frustrated a decade earlier, still possessed enormous potential as a vehicle for economic, political and social change.

The history of the Council and the War on Poverty thus underscores the point that any reform effort to end poverty in Appalachia must be at least equal in magnitude and complexity to the problem itself.

John M. Glen is assistant professor of history at Ball State University, Muncie, Ind. His book, ***Highlander,*** *won the University Press of Kentucky's 1986 Appalachian Award. He is now at work on a comprehensive history of the War on Poverty in Appalachia.*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

An Update on the Soldiers in the War on Poverty in Appalachia

Robert Gipe

Edwin Safford: Safford, a New Yorker, was one of the few community action program directors from outside Appalachia when he was in charge of the program serving Letcher, Perry, Knott, and Leslie counties in Kentucky. After leaving Kentucky, Safford returned to New York and worked for a number of years in the Office of Economic Opportunity's northeastern regional office. Safford is currently a budget officer for the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Philip H. Young: Council of the Southern Mountains president in 1966, Young currently serves as an executive with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and lives in California.

Warren Wright: Wright was the first executive director of the Council in the post-Loyal Jones era, and at last report was still living and farming in Burdine, Letcher County, Ky.

Julian Griggs: Griggs worked with migrant workers in Indiana in the 1970's and is now deceased.

Isaac "Ike" Vanderpool: After running a multi-county health service organization and working in the coal mining industry in Kentucky, Vanderpool moved to Tennessee where he presently operates a marina near Lake Norris.

Milton Ogle: Ogle, who helped orchestrate the split between the Appalachian Volunteers and the Council in 1966, directs Appalred, Inc. a legal services organization operating out of Charleston, W. Va.

Alan J. Zuckerman: Council staffer Zuckerman is currently employed by the Organization of Industrial Councils, which specializes in representing the interests of urban minority industrial workers.

Tom Davis: An Appalachian Volunteer who worked primarily in Southwest Virginia and Upper East Tennessee, Davis is a part owner of Iron Mountain Stoneware, an artists' cooperative, which was originally called Laurel Bloomery Pottery and received its initial funding from a federal grant as part of the War on Poverty.

Gordon Ebersole: Ebersole, a former member of the Congress for Appalachian Development, is retired and divides his time between Bowie, Md., and a farm in West Virginia.

R. Baldwin Lloyd: Former Council Board member Lloyd, currently directs the Appalachian People's Service Organization of Blacksburg, Va.

Lyndon Johnson: Though he was able to launch far-reaching civil rights legislation and antipoverty programs, President Johnson's increased involvement in the Vietnam War was extremely unpopular and led to his downfall. He did not run for reelection in 1968. He died on January 22, 1973.

Loyal Jones

made some gains but we lag behind the nation. Nevertheless, I think people are better off. I think the citizenry is more alert and willing to get involved.

Q: *Would you advocate some of the now-defunct War on Poverty programs coming back to the mountains?*

A: *I think we could be more imaginative in welfare-type programs trying to help people to become self-sufficient. The trend to turn everything over to the states is to allow some of the states to neglect a lot of their citizens in a way that is going to be detrimental to the whole country. We have failed to see our children as a resource.*

Q: *Of all programs at the Council, are there any you'd like never to see again?*

A: *When you think of how little they were in relation to the problem, I would say no. The Council spent a lot of money, but it was really just a pittance. We're talking about a few hundred thousand a year. I think one year we might have had as much as a million dollars in contracts. But that wasn't very much for a region of eight or nine states.*

All of the things were probably good and involved some people and made some people see things differently.

Q: *What do you consider was the most successful Council Program?*

A: *The conference itself, it brought people together to meet one another and to get a bit of inspiration.*

The community action programs were important. The talent bank was a wonderful idea although OEO got tired of it and decided it wasn't sexy enough. And defunded it.

The whole idea of having some people with training in leadership and knowing something about economic development and group process available to train community people, all of this was important. All of the programs were important.

Robert Gipe is a freelance writer living in Kingsport. He recently received a Master's Degree in American Studies from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WIN, LOSE OR DRAW?

What effect did the War on Poverty have in Appalachia?

or

Was Appalachia better off after the War on Poverty than it was before the War on Poverty?

A look at some Appalachian Communities:		median family income	families below poverty line	unemployment rate	population change
Letcher County, Ky., lies in the heart of the coalfields. Population 30,687—96.16% white. Major town: Whitesburg (pop. 1,525). Major industry: Coal mining. Agricultural products: corn, vegetables, hay, cattle.	1960 (Pre-war on poverty)	$ 2,615	55.2%	11.4%	1950-1960 -23.8%
	1970 (During the war)	$ 4,406	40.1%	4.7%	1960-1970 -23.0%
	1980 (Post-war)	$12,702	22.9%	11.9%	1970-1980 +32.5%
Swain County, N.C., borders the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Most of the county is part of the Qualla Boundary—land held in trust by the U.S. government for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee. Population 10,283—24.4% American Indian. Major towns: Bryson City, Cherokee. Major industry: Tourism. Agricultural products: Tobacco, cattle, horticulture.	1960	$ 2,484	59.1%	6.3%	1950-1960 -15.5%
	1970	$5,186	26.9%	4.6%	1960-1970 + 5.3%
	1980	$10,982	23.3%	16.4%	1970-1980 +10.8%
Kanawha County, W.Va., located in the middle of the state is home to Charleston, the state's capital and largest city (pop. 63,968). County population: 231,414—93% white. Major industries: chemicals, construction and retail. Agricultural products: corn, tobacco, beef cattle.	1960	$ 5,862	21.4%	6.1%	1950-1960 + 5.5%
	1970	$ 8,668	13.0%	4.1%	1960-1970 - 9.3%
	1980	$20,367	8.2%	6.3%	1970-1980 + .8%
Hancock County, Tenn., which adjoins the Virginia border, boasts no major highways, railroads, bus service or fast food chains. Population: 6,887 99% white. Major town: Sneedville (pop. 1,110). Major industry: Wood production. Agricultural products: Tobacco, cattle.	1960	$ 1,442	78.0%	2.8%	1950-1960 -14.9%
	1970	$ 2,683	55.5%	6.3%	1960-1970 -13.4%
	1980	$ 7,830	39.5%	11.0%	1970-1980 + 2.5%
U.S.A. Population: 226,546,000—86% white.	1960	$ 5,660	21.4%	5.1%	1950-1960 +18.5%
	1970	$ 9,586	10.7%	4.4%	1960-1970 +13.3%
	1980	$19,917	9.6%	6.5%	1970-1980 +11.4%

Statistics from U.S. census data. County descriptions compiled from the University of Kentucky Library, the Bryson City, N.C., and Charleston W.V., Chambers of Commerce, and from 1980 census data. After the 1990 census data is compiled, we'll know the effect of the Reagan years on Appalachia.

The Council of the Southern Mountains — A Scarred Veteran

Though the Council of the Southern Mountains has faced hard times, it has never ceased operation. Due to some disastrous programs, by the early 1980s the organization owed creditors $133,000. In 1984 they filed for bankruptcy. "We came out of that in June, 1986," reports the Council's Cathy Stanley. "The debt is down to $1,200, which isn't too bad," she says.

Stanley is the only staff member and is working as a volunteer, "until we can get back on our feet." She almost singlehandedly produces the Council's 64 year old quarterly magazine, Mountain Life and Work. With a small grant from the Babcock Foundation, she is also working on a mine safety program.

The Council, which is a non-profit organization, would be glad for contributions and subscribers to Mountain Life and Work ($15.00 per year). Contact the Council of the Southern Mountains at P.O. Box 1188, Clintwood, VA, 24228.

Guess it doesn't hurt your resume

Antipoverty worker Jay Rockefeller (John D. Rockefeller IV), who was a fieldworker in the Action for Appalachian Youth Program in 1964, served as governor of West Virginia from 1977 to 1985. He's currently West Virginia's junior senator.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

David Whisnant'

A Born Again Appalachian

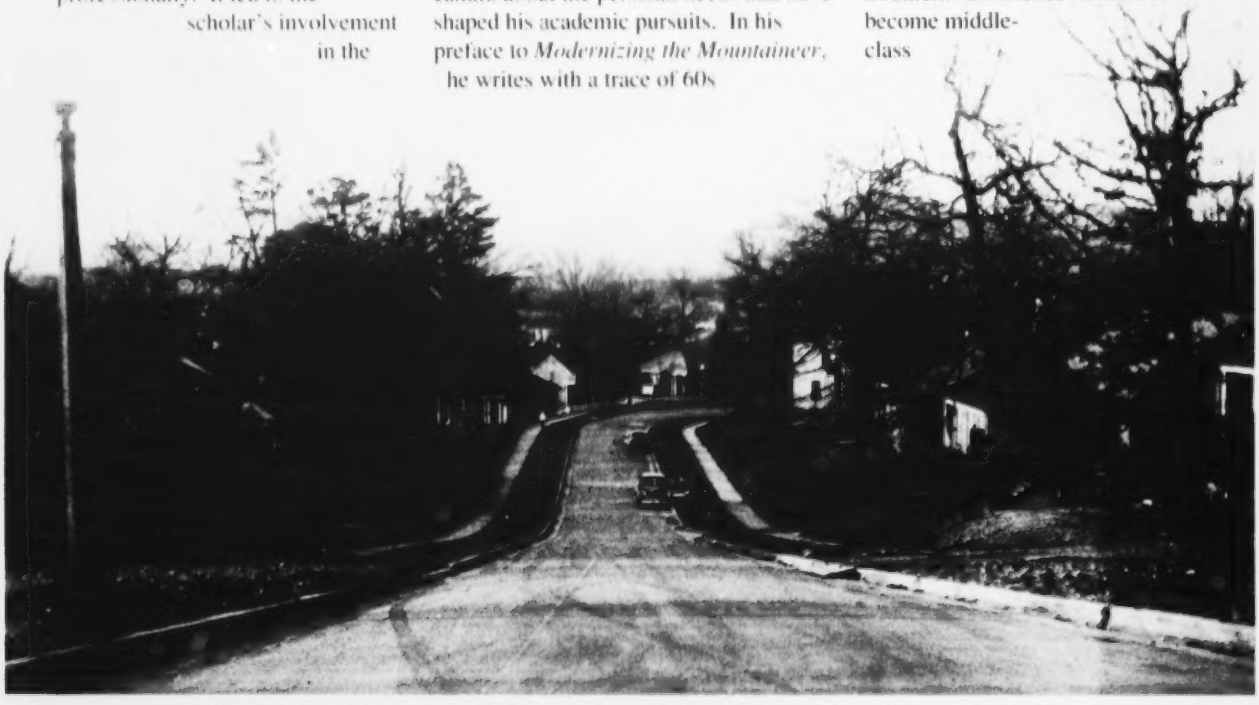
by
Jane Harris Woodside

Young David Whisnant didn't know he was growing up in Appalachia. He identified with his hometown, tidy Enka Village just outside of Asheville, N.C. He identified with the Blue Ridge mountains. But his awareness of coming from a distinct region with a culture worth valuing was a slow, gradual process, an awareness that came into sharp focus, finally and ironically, only after he had spent years living and teaching college in the flatlands of the Midwest.

Recognizing Appalachia as a force in his life marked an important turning point for him, both personally and professionally. It led to the scholar's involvement in the Appalachian Studies movement from its formative days in the late 1960s. That involvement produced numerous articles and two books, *Modernizing the Mountaineer* in 1980 and *All That Is Native and Fine* in 1983. Written in a clear, accessible style, full of conviction and dry humor, good quotes and telling details, his work has won widespread attention and admiration in the academic community and provoked debate about topics ranging from the Tennessee Valley Authority to folk festivals.

A personal search more often than not lies behind supposedly dispassionate scholarly inquiry. Whisnant is unusually candid about the personal needs that have shaped his academic pursuits. In his preface to *Modernizing the Mountaineer*, he writes with a trace of 60s romanticism, "I was born and raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, which have kept their hold on me through my more than 20 years of being away. I felt their hold quite early in life, but have been long years coming to understand it."

What Whisnant has used his work to come to terms with is, of course, not simply the hold some lovely and ancient mountains have on him. He has been reacquainting himself with the culture into which he was born in 1938, the complicated and dynamic culture of a family engaged in the multigenerational struggle to emerge from the ranks of Southern subsistence farmers to become middle-class



Enka Village, N.C., David Whisnant's home town, outside of Asheville, around 1950.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

professionals, a struggle which often insisted that the young denigrate and reject their birthright. His work in Appalachian Studies has been an examination of the forces that led to his alienation from his own culture.

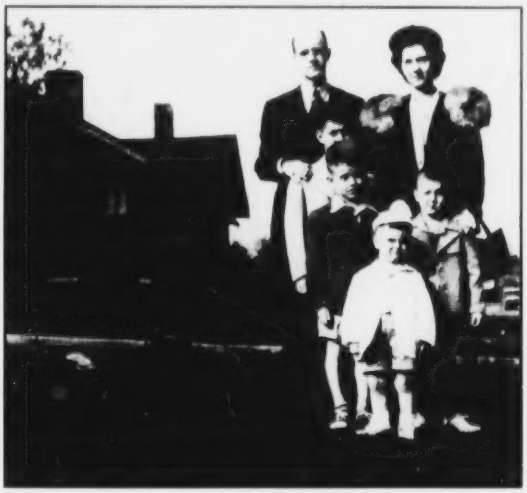
The circumstances of his early childhood worked against developing any sense of regional identity. "The family had little money. We didn't have a reliable car. So I was at least 10 or 11 years old before I was even out of the mountains. Even out of the state. We never had people come to visit us, stay with us from other places. So in the sense that an awareness of the specialness of one's own region is a comparative awareness, I didn't have that."

Another isolating force was the Baptist Church. Whisnant's years of membership in the West Asheville Baptist Church was a mixed influence. On the one hand, he muses, "I think it communicated to us that there were other things more important than just our own personal comfort, that some sense of service to other people was important. Those things were presented in a very moralistic and depoliticized and therefore alienated way, but they were nevertheless presented. So I think the first vague sense of social concern that I had was generated and sustained by the Baptist Church."

However, with its sights set on saving souls and the next world, the church itself rarely took note of important current events. For instance, Whisnant notes the segregated church never discussed the 1954 Supreme Court decision ordering school integration. "So, in one sense, what the church did was to insulate us from a variety of really important social and political realities that we should have been aware of. We should have been talking about these things. Instead, you know, we were going to Baptist training union sessions and talking in a very superficial and disconnected way about the Baptist missionary work in Nigeria. And we had no notion of where Nigeria was."

From his earliest days, Whisnant was encouraged to leave behind his native culture. His own parents, Whisnant now realizes, were important agents of this cultural alienation. Of John and Mary Neal Whisnant, he says, "My parents were very anxious, in the ways that most parents of their generation were, about anything that would compromise or weaken what little bit of upward social and economic mobility they could envision for their kids. I don't blame them for that. They were perfectly characteristic in that respect of people in that period."

John and Mary Whisnant are both bright, able people who were born into blue collar families. Mary's adoptive father was a day laborer in the construction industry. Whisnant's paternal grandfather left the family's Rutherford county farm in 1900 to work for 50 years as a bus driver in Asheville. So between his parents' working class origins and the fact that they came of age during the Depression, neither of Whisnant's parents could afford the college education that would have more firmly secured their claim to membership in the middle class.



The Whisnants in the mid-1940s. David is the second tallest child, in the dark jacket.

Whisnant's father worked for American Enka, a Dutch-owned textile company, as an engineer who made up for his lack of formal education with years of on-the-job experience. But in the 1960s, during one of the textile industry's down cycles, John Whisnant lost his job. He had spent 27 years with the company.

Such precariousness in their own lives made his parents take seriously "the threat of losing what little bit they had and of slipping back even further into their working class origins," their son observes. Like many Depression-era parents, the Whisnants placed a great deal of value on education. All four of their sons left the company town to attend college and went on to get advanced degrees.

Another way they fought against losing ground was to be sure that their children acquired cultural markers that would prepare them for upward mobility. "My parents were very very aware of the way their kids dressed, talked, the kinds of music they listened to, the friends their kids associated with, the schools they went to." For example, listening to country music broadcast over WSM was discouraged because of its associations with rural life, with lower class "uncultured" people. "They did not have the means to send us off to boarding school or to Europe to do any of those sort of acculturating and socializing things that parents with more money can do. But what they did do was to be very conscious and very anxious about the kinds of influences we were subject to in the environment where we were."

Schools also did their share in the process Whisnant calls cultural stripping. He was taught from textbooks chosen by bureaucrats in Raleigh, books which simply ignored local history and culture. But the most immediate and potent perpetrators of alienation were his schoolmates, especially after he transferred from the county into the Asheville city system for high school.

Throughout his youth, Whisnant felt like an outsider, sitting on some imaginary border line. In Enka, by virtue of being the son of a white collar worker, he perceived himself as being a rung or two above his working class peers. But in Asheville, he never quite measured up, never quite fit in with his fellow students, who considered themselves sophisticated and urbane.

"The way I talked, the way I dressed, the friends I had, the church I went to all were markers of a culture that was stigmatized. It wasn't a stigmatizing that came from outside the region," Whisnant emphasizes. "It was a stigmatizing that existed across certain cultural and socio-economic boundaries within the region. In a way, it was the old city/country disparity."

Whisnant's new peers were a product

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

of Asheville. "Asheville was up and coming, you know. And it wanted to be that way."

Founded in the late 18th century, Asheville was an old city for the mountains. By the 19th century, it had established itself as an important regional commercial and tourism center. This cast to its character meant that the city had a constant influx of new populations not often found in the rest of Appalachia. With the presence of long-established, substantial Catholic and Jewish communities, for example, the city developed some degree of cultural pluralism.

But Asheville was not quite sure what to do with the mountain culture surrounding it. "I think the fact that Asheville was a tourist center meant that it wanted to be able to sell itself as a cosmopolitan area," observes Whisnant. "Which meant that it was always in some ways embarrassed about local culture.

"Part of its strategy for doing that was to depreciate local culture. It did that at the same time that it also tried to use that local culture in a commercial way. It was very glad to have the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild there and to have the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival there because those were big draws for tourists. So it's a schizy relationship that Asheville had with those cultural systems."

During his high school days in Asheville, Whisnant's horizons were broadened. He traces his first, very faint stirrings of regional consciousness back to those days when he went to the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and the annual Guild craft fair. Still, the message Asheville gave him about Enka was that while he might come from a distinct culture, it was a deficient one.

In 1956, Whisnant enrolled at Georgia Tech in Atlanta as an engineering cooperative student. Co-operative students helped earn their tuition by alternating between going to school and working in industry as an intern. So he commuted between Georgia and Enka where he worked in his father's plant. But the more he got into his studies, the more he realized that being an engineer wasn't the way he wanted to spend the rest of his life. When in his junior year, he won both the Danforth and Woodrow Wilson fellowships to go on to graduate school, he decided to study American literature at Duke University. After earning his Ph.D. in 1965, he arrived at the University of Illinois to take up his first teaching job, in the English department.

Some time before, Whisnant had come across Thomas R. Ford's *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey* and began reading about the region. But his regional identity finally coalesced during the middle and late 60s while on the junior faculty at Illinois. As the various social and political movements appeared on the horizon, Whisnant listened and read and thought and rethought and was politicized. He read Harry Caudill's 1962 study of the coal industry's exploitation of Eastern Kentucky, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* and looked at his home region with new eyes.

The first fruit of this new consciousness was an article published in *New South* in the fall of 1970. In "Finding New Models for Appalachian Development," he observed that planners believed that if Appalachia would just urbanize and industrialize, all would be well. Vaguely but sincerely, Whisnant argued that "what we must do is find ways of alleviating the real human problems of the region (hunger, disease, infant mortality and all the rest) without turning the region itself into a mirror image of the badly flawed larger culture."

"Finding New Models" found for the English professor a new audience. Shortly after the article appeared, radical Appalachian activist Rob Burladge invited Whisnant to a meeting of the Union of Radical Political Economists in Morgantown, W. Va. There Whisnant talked and listened to people with similar concerns, perspectives, senses of mission.

Reflecting on those days, he wrote in a 1980 article, "It was a new experience for me. I was used to reading (and trying to write) scholarly articles on literature in which the function of the first footnote was usually to demonstrate that, despite apparently overwhelming evidence to the contrary, *this* minute piece of analysis had, in fact, never been undertaken before and was most needful of being undertaken now . . . To realize that there was so much *real* work to be done was exhilarating." What was especially exhilarating was that he no longer felt that his personal and professional lives had to exist in separate compartments. His personal search for a lost cultural self could pose the questions which his scholarship set about answering.

At the Morgantown meeting, participants asked him where he intended to go from there. "And I remember being very surprised because I really had no intention of doing anything with it. I had simply written the article. But then I did begin to think about it." Eventually he began talking to the University of Tennessee Press about the possibility of developing his ideas into a book. By the fall of 1972, he had left Illinois, moved back to Durham, N.C., and was under contract to Tennessee to produce a manuscript.

By the end of 1975, he had finished *Modernizing the Mountaineer*. Getting the volume published, however, took five years. As the copy editing was nearing completion, management changed at Tennessee, and the new director demanded that Whisnant remove the chapter on the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) or his contract would be cancelled. Whisnant refused and began the long process of finding another publisher. Finally in 1980, Appalachian Consortium Press produced the book.

Modernizing the Mountaineer is a series of case studies of organizations that tried to promote development in the region, including the TVA, the Council of the Southern Mountains and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Whisnant asserted that underlying these agencies' efforts to improve the life of the "backward" mountaineer was really a cultural drama, a struggle between two opposing cultural systems. That drama got played out in images.

For example, in a 1940s vintage TVA-produced movie, "The Valley of Tennessee," the mountaineers walk slumped over, look furtive, wear bib overalls and granny dresses and live in tumbledown houses. "These are technological primitives who start like a deer at the sound of dynamite or the rumbling of a bulldozer," Whisnant writes.

In contrast, the TVA men walk around looking competent, assured and in charge. "They comprehend the system and command the technology, as their fingers knowingly trace charts, blueprints and scale models. Their hands run bulldozers and swing crane booms against the sky, and their feet guide them

nimbly along the high steel." In the movie, then, according to Whisnant, "TVA is projected as the savior of a barren land and a ruined and spiritless people." What was happening in reality was that planners and technocrats were imposing their own values and beliefs, values and beliefs they considered superior, on the indigenous population.

Whisnant looks back on these days as the Appalachian Studies' movement's infancy, its first phase. During that time, "I think we raised a lot of very important questions. Nowadays, they seem so obvious that nobody really thinks about them any more," he laughs. "But then they were things that had to be argued fairly specifically.

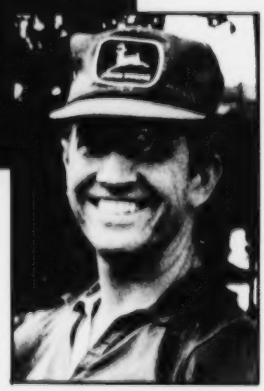
"For example, the literature up to the mid-1960s essentially talked about the isolation of the Appalachian region. It was the standard tack to take. Well, we began to look at the region in terms of its links—politically, economically, socially and culturally—to the rest of the country, particularly in the sense that the region had been used by the rest of the country for very selfish purposes for 200 years." What emerged was not a picture of the region as a quaint enclave eager to be brought into the 20th century, but the region as an internal colony whose natural resources had been pillaged by northern industrialists.

"We sketched, described, analyzed that whole set of links between the region and the outside," he notes, referring to the work done by Appalachian scholars on the impact of coal, land, water power and timber interests, missionaries, educators, labor organizers and developers. "We essentially set aside that old assumption of the region's isolation. One simply can't speak in those terms any more."

The other important contribution of the young Appalachian Studies Movement was to reformulate its cultural history. Up to that point, "a number of people were doing a lot of good descriptive documentary work on the culture and the region." Whisnant felt it was time to try to "bring together the documentary cultural work and the more political perspectives I had been sensitized to by working with a completely different set of people." Written while teaching in the American Studies department at the University of Maryland's Baltimore campus, *All That is Native and Fine* is Whisnant's contribution to the effort to describe the politics of cultural interaction between the region and the rest of the country.

"Culture must inevitably be construed in political terms," he writes in the book's conclusion, "*especially* an encounter between two cultural systems that are socially or economically unequal." During the early part of the century, then, the manipulation of culture was a tool used to establish power. Powerful northeastern industrialists were aided in their exploitation of

David Whisnant in 1948.



David Whisnant in 1987.

the mountains' human and natural resources by cultural missionaries, most often well-intentioned and apolitical women who never questioned the justice of speculators buying up land and then turning around and selling it at exorbitant profits to northern coal and railway interests.

Whisnant focused on cultural workers Katherine Pettit, who came from the Bluegrass to found the Hindman School; New Englander Olive Dame Campbell who started the John C. Campbell Folk School; and Texas-born Annabel Morris Buchanan and Richmond, Va., composer John Powell who organized the White Top Folk Festival from 1931 to 1939.

In Whisnant's estimation *All That is Native and Fine* is a more satisfying work than his first book since it is written from a more complex perspective. And the story of cultural intervention is a complex one. Whisnant acknowledges that some Appalachians helped to exploit the region, and others, that lured by the promise of a better life, mountaineers often willingly participated in their own cultural stripping.

The cultural emissaries all claimed to value mountain culture, but in fact they only valued their romanticized images of mountain culture, images which reflected their middle and upper class standards. So at White Top, for instance, they presented local square dances but urged the performers to try to get their swing right, work on the footwork and couldn't they please leave those overalls at home? Cultural interventionists often revived dying or dead cultural forms, then tinkered with what they found. At the Hindman School, they encouraged mountain women to start weaving again, then supplied them with traditional Scandinavian patterns. So they subverted indigenous culture in the name of trying to preserve it.

All That is Native and Fine received general critical acclaim. Still, a few feel his view of mountain culture is too simplistic, that he fails to recognize the forces for change endemic in Appalachia. Long-time Appalachian activist Helen Lewis notes that in *All That is Native and Fine*, he doesn't give us the thoughts and reactions of Appalachians to the cultural missionaries' work. "Native people were making changes themselves. He didn't give the local people credit. He only focused on external forces."

In general, she wishes he would broaden his focus. She is most troubled by his selectivity when it comes to culture, what she sees as his inability to deal with the "new folk," people native to the region but influenced by popular culture, blues or rock music for example. Nonetheless, she says, "He is a good thorough researcher. He has a good critical mind. He has zeroed in at looking at institutions which affected the native indigenous culture, and he has done a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

great service."

From the outset, while renewed by his work in the Appalachian Studies movement, Whisnant wasn't always comfortable with what he was hearing. There was the matter of definition. "I remember even at an early time, having some serious reservations about the region that those people were projecting. What they called it was Appalachia, but what it was really was the Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia coalfields. And I had not grown up in a coalfield. I had never seen a coal mine. I knew nothing about unions at the time because there was not one at the plant where my father worked. It was the textile industry. It was a whole different scene."

His doubts grew and deepened. "I think in some ways we got trapped. There was a kind of romanticism about a lot of that early rhetoric. There was a lot of paranoia, which in some ways was justified because, Lord knows, the region had been exploited for a hundred years at least. But I think we weren't as aware of that as we might have been. We weren't as self-critical as we might have been.

"On the one hand, we were trying to analyze all those strong, functioning links, very dysfunctional links," he corrects himself, laughing, "between the region and the rest of the country, and at the same time we were arguing a kind of old fashioned romantic Appalachian exceptionalism. We were trying to have it both ways.

"We were trapped in the wrong questions," he observes. "We really needed to worry less about the region as a region than we were." Worrying so much about the region as a region often saddled the movement with isolationist blinders that proposed narrow and ultimately unworkable solutions to the region's problems. "People in the early 70s were talking about coal as an alternative energy source instead of foreign oil. Well, sure, up to a certain point that can be seen as a stop-gap solution." But Whisnant believes that because of environmental considerations, it is not a viable answer either to the nation's energy problem or to the region's economic woes.

"We have to get beyond that. And we will not get beyond it regionally until there are some national and even international policy shifts." What Whisnant advocates is some form of social democracy, some system which puts society's welfare ahead of individual private property rights. "And I don't see those shifts on the horizon. And I think any kind of regional solution—for the Amazon basin or Appalachia or any other region—is going to have to be predicated on those unalterable limits."

Whisnant has traveled some distance from his view in "Finding New Models" that his region can serve as a laboratory for more humane and viable alternative lifestyles. Appalachia is not simply an internal colony which can save itself from insensitive and greedy outsiders by reclaiming local control over its own affairs. It is a complex, interdependent part of a global system.

When he finished *All That is Native and Fine*, he began to feel restless. "All that I knew at the time was that I had said the major things that I then had to say about the Appalachian region and that I felt that I was beginning to echo myself. And I didn't think that was very healthy in terms of my own intellectual or political growth. So I thought it was time to do something else."

He took up the study of Spanish "for a whole variety of reasons, partly having to do with some old feelings that I still have about my own provincialism, my own parochialism." Whisnant wasn't quite sure where it was all leading.

"I do remember feeling a good deal of the same kind of excitement, the same burst of energy and enthusiasm about it that I felt when I first started the Appalachian work. And it was partly for that reason that I trusted what was happening, trusted the dynamic." Where it all led, almost inevitably for a person with his intense and earnest interest in politics, was to his current work on a book on the cultural policy and politics of Nicaragua.

And so, as the Appalachian Movement continues to evolve, it will evolve, by and large, without David Whisnant. He is certainly not leaving the field entirely behind. This fall, he began a new job in the English department at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill where he will teach courses that deal with Appalachia as well as courses incorporating his recent work on cultural politics in Nicaragua.

David Whisnant has made important contributions to the Appalachian Studies movement. But Appalachian Studies has also served him well—intellectually, politically, personally. For through his work on the region, he has searched for and reclaimed much of his lost cultural self, the parts of himself so many people urged him to jettison so that he could better himself and rise above his origins. It has been the scholarly work spurred by that search that has made his reputation, that has secured for him a place among the ranks of middle class professionals.

All That is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region *is available from the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, for $12.00 (paperback).*

Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power and Planning in Appalachia *is available from Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, N.C., for $10.95 (paperback).*

Jane Woodside is a folklorist and Associate editor of ***Now and Then.***

I'm Just Talkin'

Like oysters making pearls from pain,
We wrap our families in tales.
We place nacreous words, layers of language
Around the hurts and griefs
Until the spiky shape is smoothed,
Encased in story.

Slightly iridescent when polished,
They are prized, perhaps,
And we're accounted raconteurs
By those who hear us talk.

—Eleanor Brownfield

Eleanor Brownfield is a native of Atlanta, where she now lives and works as an actor and a stage manager. She has been reading and writing since the age of four.

Sister Marie Ubinger

Evangelized by the Poor

by Tim Boudreau

There's irony in the way Sister Maura Ubinger views the life she led in Pittsburgh. She remembers it as a sheltered existence, far removed from the day-to-day struggles of most people.

Her move nine years ago to the small, isolated community of Fleming-Neon opened her eyes to the way the world works. In a remote Kentucky county far from the centers of power, she learned on a very personal level about greed, and how power and influence can affect those who have neither.

The idea to set up a mission in Letcher County was not hers, she says. Another nun from her Catholic Benedictine order, who had spent time in Appalachia, proposed it. Ubinger went only after much prayer and deliberation.

"I had no big expectations.....I came here not for any great holy reasons or to convert people to the Church," Ubinger recalls. "I had no grandiose plans to make life better. I'm not a workaholic and I'm not a messiah."

But she is a woman committed to change in a region she says has suffered too long at the hands of outside interests. Kentucky lawmakers, often dominated by coal interests, often allow what she sees as abuses to continue.

Broad form deeds allow mineral owners—often coal interests controlled by multinational companies—to use whatever means necessary to extract coal from beneath a homeowner's property. These means include strip mining. Tax policies keep coal-rich counties throughout eastern Kentucky virtually bankrupt.

"I think coal companies, and the big

corporations behind them, are a big part of the problem" in Eastern Kentucky and the rest of Appalachia, she says. "There's no money for decent schools or decent health care. I'd like to think we could attract the industries if we had decent schools and other services that communities elsewhere take for granted."

Local people working for systemic change is key to alleviating the region's problems, Ubinger believes.

She works for change through Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, a grassroots group that strives to empower local citizens. The organization is now focusing its efforts on an amendment on the November ballot to limit the abuses of the broad form deed. It has long been a proponent of an unmined minerals tax, which it says would provide more money to coal-rich counties.

Before she moved to Appalachia, Ubinger says she had some vague ideas of what to expect.

She knew of the poverty that existed in parts of Eastern Kentucky (though based on what she had read, she thought it would be more widespread). She is still amazed by the tremendous contrast between rich and poor, for instance, at seeing a stately home next to a shack.

She also expected to find some anti-Catholic sentiment among her neighbors—and she did.

Many of her neighbors greeted the Benedictines' arrival in Fleming-Neon with suspicion, if not outright hostility. The order was certainly new and different. Ubinger estimates only about 200 practicing Catholics live in the county.

She recalls one local man who hid his face when the nuns were near. Even her mechanic, when asked by a stranger for directions to their home, pretended he'd never heard of the sisters.

Eventually, her neighbors grew used to them. There was an"unspoken turnaround"; some of the prejudices broke down. Some locals, including her next-door neighbor, became good friends.

Ubinger has always shied from the stereotypes many outsiders hold of the region's people. She believes that the greatest stereotype afflicting Appalachia is that its poor have little desire to improve their condition.

"I've never met anyone on welfare

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

who wanted to be on welfare," she says.

She likens third-generation welfare recipients to third-generation Harvard graduates. Poor education and poor self-image feed off each other. Failure, like success, becomes a lifestyle.

Her religion and lifestyle seldom set her apart from her neighbors. She makes no secret of her work, though she is a bit shy of publicity. Ubinger and her sisters keep a low profile. They don't knock on doors, unsolicited, offering their services.

Still, she says, word gets out that their help is available.

Her well-kept home is one in a long row of one-time coal camp houses that line the main road leading west out of Fleming-Neon. Only the bright blue paint outside and the makeshift chapel inside distinguish it from her neighbors'. In the distance, a mountain, its sides gouged out by a strip mine, stands like a skyscraper over the town.

Even today, having lived in Letcher County for nine years, she is acutely aware of her position as a non-native. For that reason, and because of her personal philosophy, she is reluctant to try to tell Appalachians how they should improve their lives.

Her time in Appalachia has taught her the importance of accepting others' values, even when they conflict with her own. For example, she knows of homes without indoor plumbing—but with a satellite dish.

That bothers many who visit the region. "A lot of people want to 'straighten out' the area," she says. "I say to let it be. Don't try to change people's values. That goes for everywhere, not just here in Appalachia."

She's seen her share of volunteers come and go. She's skeptical about the chance for long-term change when outsiders try to "pull all the strings." As an outsider, they always enjoy the option of leaving at will. That option is less available to those native to the area.

"I would stay as long as my Benedictine community doesn't coerce me to return or until I feel I could do more elsewhere," Ubinger says.

Much of her time now is spent as executive coordinator for the Catholic Committee of Appalachia, a post she assumed in July. She also tutors area residents working toward their GEDs, networks with other citizens groups and visits the poor, sick and aged—what she calls "Band Aid" work.

"There are some who would be upset that we're not out beating the bricks to bring people into the Catholic Church," she points out. But she praises her order for stressing presence over proselytizing.

While she's discovered problems, she says she's also found great personal strength in Appalachians. She remains optimistic about the future of the region.

Appalachians are caring and loving, she says. "They have time for one another. Time to tell stories and to listen. They are very personal and personable, very people-oriented."

Yet she sees a dichotomy in the way they see themselves. Many hold themselves in low regard. One woman she worked with said it mattered little that her husband was beating her.

"If he's beating on me, he's just beating on nothing," she told Ubinger.

"They wouldn't have that low self-esteem were it not for exploitative powers that have come into the area over the years," Ubinger says.

"At the very core of my being is a belief that everyone is as important as everyone else. I've seen so many people tramped on. Worth is not tied to being the Pope or the president. I want to break that belief that self-worth is tied to prestige, money and power.

She is realistic about how much she can accomplish alone.

"I haven't torn down any great mountains. You probably couldn't fill a page with my real recognizable successes," Ubinger says.

But she points to organized efforts and one-on-one work, helping her neighbors build their self-esteem, as reasons of hope.

What she has learned about herself has been the most memorable aspect of her life in Appalachia.

"I've been helped more than I've helped," Ubinger says. "I've been evangelized by the poor, touched by the many lives that I've touched.

"Maybe that's why I want to stay for 30 more years."

Tim Boudreau is a reporter for the ***Chillicothe Gazette*** *in Ohio.*

Strawberry Flats

Saturday last
On Strawberry Flat,
Ethmer Arnest, 21,
Attempted to ride
His fourwheeler
Up Anvil Ridge
At an angle of
Eighty degrees.
His "all-terrain"
Vehicle lost traction,
Flipping backward and
over several times
Down the incline,
Breaking his neck
And crushing his skull.
Arnold, dead on arrival
At Jefferson Hospital,
Leaves no survivors.
Services are Monday
At two at Boston Valley
Community Church
With interment in the
Church cemetery by
The Clingbeard Funeral Home.
Pallbearers are
Members of the
Strawberry Flats
Four-wheelers Club.

-Walter Darrell Haden

Walt Haden has been a teacher and poet since 1954 when he taught in a two-room school in his native Missouri Ozarks. He has given readings of his poetry in New Orleans, New York, Missouri, Mississippi and Arkansas. He introduced the first course in folklore at the University of Tennessee at Martin 20 years ago and has served as folklorist at two Governor's Schools in the state, the latter in 1988 in Tennessee Studies at ETSU.

PERCEPTIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS NOW AND THEN

Archives of Appalachia

This is probably a good representation of a long-held vision of Appalachia. (from the Elizabethton Star, 1967)

The reality would have to include this. (Photo by Ken Murray, Southwest Virginia, 1987).

Southern Highlands Research Center

...AND THIS. Cornelia Vanderbilt opening Vanderbilt house to the public in 1930. The mansion, which was built in 1895, is the only public trust operated for private profit in the U.S. Its 30,000 acres in Buncombe County, N.C., (Asheville), drew 650,000 visitors this year (from July '88 to July '89), most of whom paid $22 each for admission.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Neg. No. LC-USW 3-31380D

The Tennessee Valley Authority was a huge public works project intended to bring Appalachia out of the Depression and into the 20th Century by providing electricity to homes throughout the mountains in the 1930s. This man worked at the Douglas Dam . The photo was made for the U.S. Office of War Information by Arthur Rothstein, 1942.

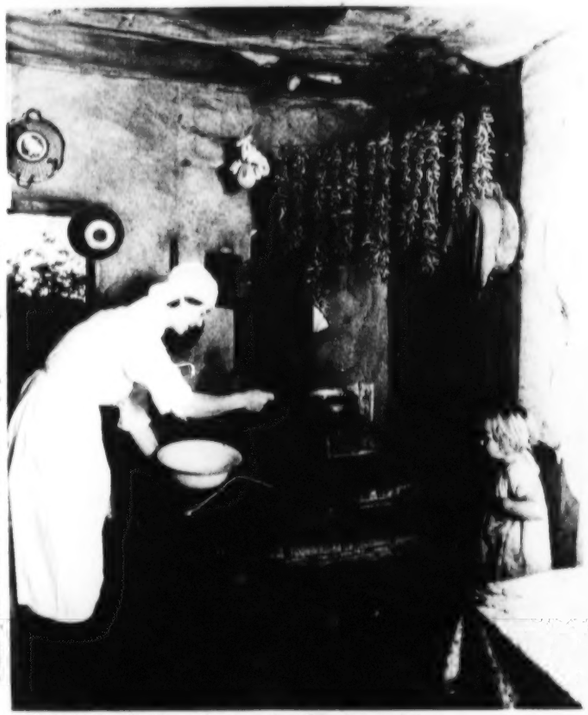
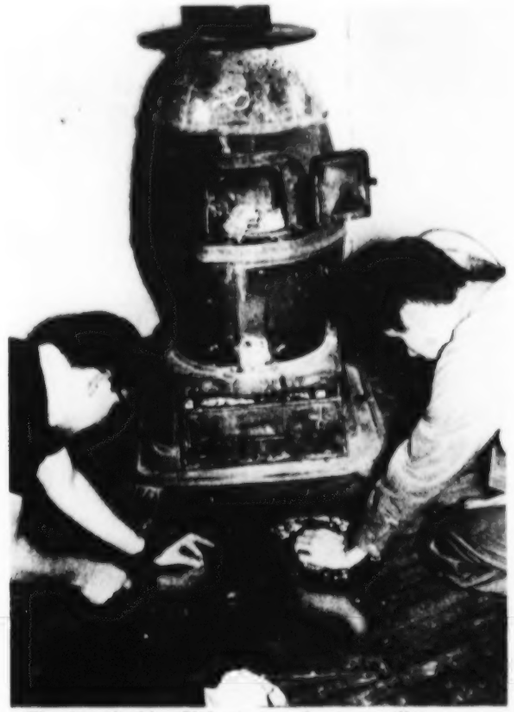


Photo by Russell Lee From the University of Kentucky Archives.

A nurse for the frontier nursing Service assists a family in Eastern Kentucky in the 1930s.



Berea College Archives

The Appalachian Volunteers, who were college students working on weekends, repairing stove in a one-room schoolhouse in Eastern Kentucky, 1960s.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Letter to Hong Kong From My 8th-Grade Latin Teacher in Alabama, 36 Years Later

Vowed I would not let another week pass
before I wrote.
Back from Charlotte for my last checkup for my eyes.
I had surgery there in November.
Did not realize I could not see colors correctly
until the first cataract was gone.
I see fine now.

Don't know from whom you hear in town,
but I'll try first to list those
of your Mother's friends who've also died:

Evelyn (57 yrs.), died Thursday after a
three-yr. valiant battle with cancer.
Ralph from cancer about a month ago.
He had a lovely second wife. Harriet,
his daughter lost one of her sons in
the Service before Christmas. She is
divorced. He dropped a bomb. They were
loaded.
Mary Frances was found dead in bed last fall.
She was Van's stepmother.
Fred and his wife were brutally murdered in March.
Mr. Mill is gone, Garvin gone.
Clarence is still here, in body only. Poor thing.
Virginia (Mrs. Fred Sr.) is gone. Her house,
in front of Clarence's is vacant still.
Sunny Sr. is gone. Poor Tommy, his wife, is
senile, and so pathetic.
Dr. S. (Donald) has Parkinson's disease. They
don't talk about it, but you can surely tell it.
Marvin has cancer all over him. Pitiful.
Thomas is in very poor condition. Rose still
hangs on.
Doris is gone, as is Catherine.

My garden is very pretty now, but so full of weeds.
I've spent today watering it.
And they all have Baptist appetites.
I can't work in it like I used to
because of a bad back and foot and 80 years!
Get the fellows from the Fellowship House, alcoholics,
to help me and they are pretty good for the most part.
I enjoy it, and so do my friends.

What do you think of all the Methodist hullabaloo
about deleting "Onward Christian Soldiers"
from the hymnal?
And the Baptists quarreling
about what is and isn't true in the Bible?
Two august bodies spending precious time on such silly things.

By the way,
our minister resigned on Sunday.
For my part, I am delighted.
Wish we could get a little more mature fellow
than we have had.
And in Charlotte, the minister of the largest Baptist Church
has left the Baptist and going to become an Episcopal priest!

Oh yes, Justin R. is in London with a liver transplant,
doing very well.
Poor Hazel is here on needles and pins.
She was over there for three months. Just returned, in fact.

What are you doing during the vacation?
I'd love to see you. I'm home for good, I think.
Can't take all this running around any more.
I'm surely glad I did all my gadding when I was younger.
Let me hear from you.

Fondly,

Mrs. M.

When I Had Done It,

"Bow Back did it," I allowed,
as guiltless as my phantom.

I could more reasonably have said,
"Great-great Granddaddy did it"
if I had known chronological mythologies,
had charted my chromosomes
like an astrologer's ancestral log.

Perhaps in an earlier life, I,
a cat, back arched, shrieked.
Perhaps I stalked Notre Dame.

"Bow Back did it," I repeated.
My parents seemed not to believe.
"Bow Back did it, really."

Their smile was not nice.
I knew that they had not seen him.

-Louie Crew

Louie Crew (a.k.a. Li Min Hua) has published over 600 items, including his poetry volumes Sunspots (Lotus Press, Detroit, 1976) and Midnight Lessons (Samisdat, 1987). Crew has edited issues of College English and Margins . From 1983-87, Crew lived in exile in Asia. He taught in Beijing and at Chinese University of Hong Kong. He says that "Letter to Hong Kong from My 8th-Grade Latin Teacher" grew out of his Appalachian childhood.

Preacher With a Horse to Ride

a play by Jo Carson

Photo by Russell Lee. From the University of Kentucky Archives.

In early 1931—during the depths of the Great Depression—Harlan County, Ky., coal miners organized a number of mass protests, marches and walkouts, agitating for a living wage. But the union they hoped would represent them, the United Mine Workers, had privately joined the coal operators and local officials in thwarting the organizing drive.

Tensions flared, and on May 5, three mine guards and one miner were killed in a gun battle, and the county became known as "Bloody Harlan." The leadership of the organizing drive was arrested on charges stemming from the shootings.

The Communist-led National Miners Union stepped into the void, but by October their efforts, too, were floundering. In November, the NMU brought novelist Theodore Dreiser and seven other writers and activists to hold unofficial hearings in Harlan to revitalize the organizing drive and bring attention to the abuses of miners and the injustices and poverty in the coalfields. The committee hoped that the hearings would pressure the local power structure and raise money for striking or blacklisted miners. The strategy failed. The miners lost the battle, and the coalfields of Eastern Kentucky remained non-union.

***Preacher With a Horse to Ride** is based on these events. After a University of Kentucky archivist sparked my interest in the story, I read extensively about the place and time, about the Communist Party, the unions, the music, the church. I read most all of Dreiser's published work and talked to people who remembered 'the troubles.' There was so much that wanted telling. I was warned once that a writer must not confuse the facts with the truth. Until I started trying to write this play about people who lived a chunk of history in the region where I live and work, the remark passed by me lightly. It does not pass lightly anymore.*

These excerpts are adapted from the hearing sequences which are interspersed through the play.

THE PEOPLE

I took great liberties in presuming I could put words in the mouths of those people whose real names I used, including Molly Jackson and Theodore Dreiser. Hoit Bessman and the others who speak at the hearings are composites of real people and real stories.

THEODORE DREISER: The American novelist who wrote *An American Tragedy, Sister Carrie*, and other now-classic books. By 1932, he was 61 and had already written his best work. He had become a crusader for the working class at the expense of his art.

MOLLY JACKSON: A National Miners Union organizer, a trained nurse, midwife and radical woman. People described her as having such intensity that she was frightening. She was 50, looked older.

HOIT BESSMAN: One of the forces behind the Coal Operator's Association, which was developed, in part, to fight the UMWA. They really got scared with the National Miners Union.

WITNESSES: Cecil Powers, Calloway Hobbs and other residents of Harlan County.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE SETTING

Onstage is a simple set for the hearings held by Dreiser and the committee: benches are like those sometimes found in older, poorer churches, and there is a rough table.

THE HEARINGS

THEODORE DREISER: My name is Theodore Dreiser and I am here with the Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners. We have come to Kentucky to test free speech and the rights to assembly, rights guaranteed by the Constitution of this nation, rights which, according to reports, have been ignored in Harlan County...

AUNT MOLLY JACKSON: You are here to listen to the stories on the starvin' people and carry 'em out with you so the rest of the world will know we're dyin' here.

DREISER: The Governor of Kentucky has promised there will be no reprisals for anything that is said at these hearings.

FIRST VOICE: The governor don't live here...

SECOND VOICE: The governor's got interest in coal...

DREISER: We have a detachment of militia to guarantee our safety.

FIRST VOICE: Who's gonna' be here when you're gone?

JACKSON: Molly Jackson will be!

DREISER: We ask that you be as straightforward as possible in your answers to our questions, and in that interest we will ask that you swear on your name that what you say is the truth. Who will be first?

(Nobody)

JACKSON: Talk, you got to talk. Somebody's got to get up here and start!

(Nobody)

A WOMAN: I will tell the committee what I know but I will not tell my name.

JACKSON: You have to say your name.

WOMAN: My husband still has a job and he'd lose it if they was to know...I will tell you we have had one dollar in the last four days to live on, my husband, myself, and three children.

DREISER: How do you distribute that money?

WOMAN: We live on beans and we don't get no dinner.

DREISER: What do you call dinner, noon or night?

WOMAN: We have breakfast and we would have dinner at noon, I have breakfast and I put up a little lunch for him to take to work. And he works hard. I'll tell you what I had to put in his bucket this mornin'. There was a little cooked pumpkin and fat white bacon. And what we had for breakfast was water gravy and black coffee.

DREISER: What is water gravy?

WOMAN: Water and grease and a little flour.

DREISER: What did you give the children?

WOMAN: They don't get nothin' different and they don't get no dinner either.

JACKSON: She eats. There are those that don't eat but what they beg. They beg from her. Her husband ain't been blacklisted.

CECIL POWERS:He's a scab. He signed a yellow dog contract

and stuck by it. My name is Cecil Powers.

DREISER: Mr. Cecil Powers. Have you ever signed a yellow dog contract?

POWERS: I signed several when I was workin'.

DREISER: What does it mean?

POWERS: It means you won't join no union while you work for that company.

DREISER: Someone spoke of a blacklist...

POWERS: I seen 'em run to the books and look when a man asked about work. They come back and they say "you can't get no work." They done it to me.

DREISER: Do you know why?

POWERS: I heard it was because I joined a union.

HOIT BESSMAN: He joined the National Miners Union.

POWERS: I joined the UMWA but they backed out when we needed 'em. And the National Miners Union come in and they put up soup kitchens and they give us tents. I joined 'em.

DREISER: Tents?

POWERS: I ain't got a house no more. We was evicted. The NMU give us a tent.

DREISER: You're planning on living the winter in a tent?

POWERS: I reckon. There ain't much place to walk to with a woman and four children.

BESSMAN: The house Mr. Powers lived in belongs to the owner of the mine he was working at when he broke his contract and joined the union (to Powers) And you struck, if I remember...

POWERS: We did.

BESSMAN: The owner will give that house to a man who will work.

POWERS: A scab.

BESSMAN: It is policy determined by the Coal Operators Association.

POWERS: Mr. Bessman, did you know your Coal Operators Association is killin' people.

BESSMAN: Mr. Powers, did you know your NMU is a Communist organization and advocates the seizing of private property?

POWERS: As a matter of fact, I do.

BESSMAN: And you joined them.

POWERS: At first, I didn't give a damn what it was. I joined it for the food. But there comes a time when a man ain't got no more he can lose. It's the time when an animal you're a-huntin'll turn around an' fight. Well, a man'll fight, too. I'll fight now. And it'll be the Communists I'm fightin' for.

BESSMAN: Those are dangerous words.

POWERS: It's a dangerous man said 'em.

CALLOWAY HOBBS: My name is Calloway Hobbs and I

don't live in no company house. I live in a house belonged to my daddy before he died. He died in a mine. That's the way poor men die around here. He left me his house. And my wife keeps a little garden durin' the summer and puts things by so we ain't starvin'.

I'm better off than most, I know that. But my house has been searched four times. There's thugs that come in with guns when you ain't got one—they took all ours already and they split open mattresses and chairs...

DREISER: What are they looking for?

HOBBS: Papers. They ain't got no warrant, there ain't no bother with a warrant no more, and they stand the children up against the wall and try to get 'em to tell on their daddy.

DREISER: What papers?

HOBBS: To prove I'm working for a union, or liter'ture to prove I'm Communist.

DREISER: Did they find them?

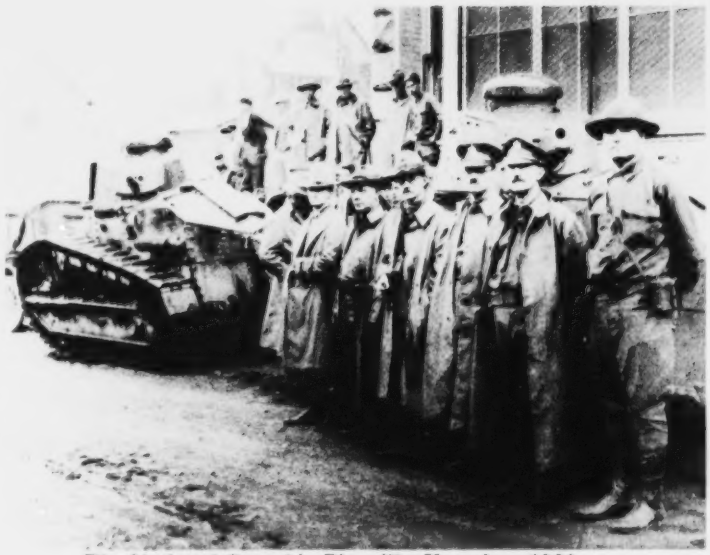
HOBBS: I ain't in jail. Four times I been searched, and then my house was shot up. Six of 'em come drivin' by in three cars, one of 'em with a machine gun and they shot up my house.

My wife and children was at her mother's, they would likely died if they'd a been there. And me, first shot come whizzin' by me and I run out the back and up the hill, and I see 'em sittin' out workin' that machine gun, and I know who done it. Write that down, anybody that wants to. My name is Calloway Hobbs and I know who shot up my house.

JACKSON: I'm gonna sing you'uns a song. It come to me and

I sung it in New York and Chicago when we was tryin' to raise some money, and I am honored to sing it here at these hearin's held by Mr. Dreiser and this committee. (She sings.)

I'm sad and I'm weary, I got the hungry ragged blues,
I'm sad and I'm weary, I got the hungry ragged blues.
Not a penny in my pocket to buy the thing I need to use.



Herndon Evans Collection, University of Kentucky Archives.

The National Guard in Pineville, Ky., circa 1931.

I woke up this mornin' with the worst blues I ever had in my life,
woke up this mornin' with the worst blues I ever had in my life.
Not a bite to eat for breakfast, a poor coal miner's wife.

(She speaks.) You could hear some of the worst stories you ever heard, I can tell 'em 'cause I seen 'em and I lived 'em and I helped bury the children I pulled into this world as a granny woman. Bury 'em out in the back yard. Four on a good week, seven on a bad. A grave a day. It's just a little hole though, it's babies we're a-buryin'. (She sings.)

When my husband works in a coal mine, he loads a car on ever' trip,
When my husband works in a coal mine, he loads a car on ever' trip,
Then he goes to the office that evenin' and gets denied of scrip.

(She speaks.) I am a Communist. I belong to the National Miners Union. I am a Communist because I love America, but I do not love the thing the capitalist loves. I do not love money. I love my comrades, my brothers and sisters and their children and capitalists is killin' 'em in Kentucky. I'd be ashamed to be a capitalist. Old man Hoit Bessman should be ashamed of the Coal Operators Association. I'd be ashamed. I'd be ashamed to be workin' in coal right now. But it ain't no shame to be poor and it ain't no shame to be hungry. (She sings.)

All the women in the coal camps are sittin' with bowed down heads,
All the women in the coal camps are sittin' with bowed down heads,
Ragged and barefoot, the children are a-cryin' for bread.

(She speaks.) Don't go under the mountain again. Don't

Good For One-Way Trip
—TO—
KENTUCKY-TENNESSE LINE
Overlooking Historic Cumberland Gap
Pineville Transportation Co.
Incorporeal
RESPLENDENT LINCOLNS, FORDS, PACKARDS
Special Service For New York Writers

A card printed by the coal interests. It was union supporters who got one way tickets.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Courtesy of the United Mine Workers of America.

Harlan County, Ky., 1972.

nobody go under the mountain again till the money stops jinglin' in the operators' pockets, till there ain't no fat on them like there ain't no fat on us, till they ain't got no clothes to keep warm and no shoes. Do you have shoes? Don't go under the mountain again till you get a decent place to live and fair credit for what you load, and if that don't never come, then don't never go under the mountain again! (She sings.)

Some coal operators will tell you the hungry blues are not so bad,
Some coal operators will tell you the hungry blues are not so bad.
They are the worst blues this poor woman ever had.

(JACKSON steps down. DREISER offers her a hand, she takes it.)

DREISER: I didn't get your name.
JACKSON: I am Molly Jackson, called Aunt Molly Jackson.

*The song **Kentucky Miner's Wife's Hungry Ragged Blues** was written by Molly Jackson.*

*Some of the hearings material is adapted from Theodore Dreiser's book **Harlan Miners Speak**.*

*Jo Carson, besides being the **Now and Then** poetry editor, is a playwright, poet and performer from Johnson City, Tenn.*

*These excerpts appeared, in a slightly different form, in **Southern Exposure's** "Theater in the South" issue.*

Bloody Harlan Keeps Fighting

In 1972 Harlan County faced another bitter strike. It was intended as the spearhead of a new attempt by United Mine Workers of America to organize Eastern Kentucky.

There was no easy victory. The pickets at the Brookside mine met with armed opposition and strike-breakers. The strike was peppered with several armed picket-line confrontations and half a dozen shooting incidents and beatings. The situation came to a head when a miner, Lawrence Jones, 22, was shot. He died August 28, 1973. A mine foreman was charged with the shooting.

On August 29, after 13 months of striking, Eastover Mining, a subsidiary of Duke Power, signed a contract with the UMWA. The union president at the time, Arnold Miller, called the accord "a message to every nonunion coal operator in the land that coal-mining families have had their fill of death-trap mines, starvation wages and meager benefits in return for their labor."

The documentary film, ***Harlan County, U.S.A.***, directed by Barbara Kopple, covered the events of the strike and won the Academy Award for best documentary in 1977.

Shortly after the contract victory, Brookside began laying off workers. Today, that mine is closed. Arch of Kentucky is the only union mine in operation in Harlan County. The coalfields of Eastern Kentucky remain largely non-union.

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Services
is pleased to announce publication of
In Place
a collection of Appalachian Writers
edited by Ronald K. Giles
with fiction and poetry by

Pat Arnow, Tamara Baxter, Robert Bray, Jo Carson, Suzanne Clark, David K. Fenner, John Hart, Greta Heberg, Don Johnson, Michael Joslin, Thomas D. Lane, Jeff Daniel Marion, Nell McGrady, John Morefield, Judy Odom, Pat E. Salyer, Bonny Stanley and Fred Waage.

In Place is available for $4.95 through CASS, Box 19180A, Johnson City, Tenn. 37614-0002. The book may be ordered using the form in the back of the magazine.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Early days at Keno

excerpts from a diary
Harriette Simpson Arnow

Courtesy of Bernice Mitchell and Sandy Ballard.

Harriette Arnow, visiting the scene of her first teaching post, near Burnside, Ky. This picture was made by her friend, Bernice Mitchell, in 1936, shortly after the publication of Arnow's first novel, *Mountain Path*, which was based on her experiences in this school.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Novelist Harriette Arnow and her husband Harold moved to a farm near Burnside, Ky., in the fall of 1939. They were newlyweds who dreamed they could run a subsistence farm and write in their spare time. A chronicle of the first few chaotic days, excerpted from the author's diary, appeared in our last issue. The following summer, the County Board of Education, knowing that Arnow had been a teacher, asked her to teach in the one-room school on the upper edge of her farm. It would mean $90 for seven months work beginning in July. She accepted, and chronicled the experience in her diary. The following is excerpted from her entries:

June 29

I am tired tonight with a dull brown taste in my mouth. The Teachers' Conference was like most of the others I ever attended both in the country and city: unspeakably dull, remote as the stars from the quick hot lives of the children we deal with, weighing me down as ever with the same old thought that the educational system exists for itself, or worse yet, for some intangible something like a future half planned in the half-baked mind of some executives known as 'educators.' Children of the masses are dosed with that they will need to make them contented citizens of this future. Almost nothing was said of children, however. The time was taken chiefly by a bright young man from the State Education Department who spent a long while in telling us how to keep our record books, but when asked questions by some of the puzzled teachers got tangled up on his answers and finally had to be straightened out by a beginning teacher fresh from Normal School who had just learned all about record keeping.

July 9

Tired and through late with my working—the first day of teaching went off smoothly enough. The children don't quite seem to know what to make of me as a teacher, and I am not certain how to treat them as pupils; smart enough they are, but backward in their learning. Eighteen came today, scattered through all the grades from the primer to the seventh. I have all classes.

The building is small with walls that have never known paint and a floor that has never seen oil, no toilets, a rickety teacher's desk, a badly tattered Bible, two maps, a globe, a little old homemade recitation bench, a homemade water bench, and two short rows of old seats and desks, long since unblemished by any varnish they might have had when they left the factory, most without shelves for books, and initialed, toothed and jiggered and jagged by jackknives. In the center of the room stands a great rusty double-bellied stove, while in the front crookedly clinging to the wall by three tacks is a fly-specked likeness of George Washington. Painted under this likeness is a four-foot strip of blackboard, the paint put on so long ago that in most spots it is dull brown instead of black.

Today, in addition to the children I had at various times under or about the house two hogs, three calves, two mules, a mare, two dogs, and one fat black hen that had to be showed out at intervals.

The greatest trial of the day was second grade reading. After six months the children had naturally forgotten much of their reading vocabularies—a very different one indeed from their ordinary talking vocabularies—and the lesson presented especial difficulties since it was all about a birthday cake with candles. They couldn't imagine such a thing as a birthday cake with candles, nor could they seem to understand just what a candle was. Such is the blotting effect of civilzation. Their great-great grandparents, some doubtless living in the same houses they now life in, doubtless knew nothing but candles. Now they know nothing but coal-oil lamps and carbides.

July 12

More and more I gnash my teeth at whatever grinning fiend, from that hell prepared especially for teachers, who put it in the minds of some educational board to adopt the textbooks I am trying to use. Just once I wish one of those men whoever or whatever he is had to try to teach little seven year old Mabel—the whole of my first grade—those lessons in her reader having to do with the policeman at the curb, the stop and go signals, the fire alarm, and the traffic. Oh, Mabel can say p'liceman, traffic, curb, fire alarm, after me as prettily as you please, but in her eyes there is something troubled and uncomprehending. Mabel has never ridden in an automobile or talked over a telephone or seen a movie or seen a train or heard a fire alarm or seen the glimmer of an electric light.

Then I wish that same man could teach my third grade children, two unusually bright little girls, that particular language lesson in which the children are asked to write sentences about a picture of a little girl feeding a very funny big looking sort of pig out of a very little looking china bowl. They giggle and wondered why the pig didn't turn the bowl over. All the pigs they had ever seen would do that. We compromised and wrote sentences about our Good Neighbor's hogs in the schoolyard. When I think of these textbooks used by rural children all over this state, textbooks so patently written with never a whoop for the needs of or interests of rural children, I get a sickness in my stomach.

July 16

Teaching is a sore burden. Once I am there I like the work well enough but I do hate to be away from home. I could can a thousands quarts of stuff, and still have a great deal left.

The calves are gone again and we are afraid they will be in the corn. Harold got the long burned-out strip fixed but there is another stretch of old rail fence down that a blind elephant could get through.

July 23

I don't guess we will revise our budget after all. Two letters came in the mail, one of them from the county school superintendent saying he had just been to Frankfort and that the woman with whom I have been corresponding about a certificate said I could not get one. Hence, he felt it his duty to remind me that I would not get paid either for the time I had already taught or for any more I might put in.

The other letter was from the woman in Frankfort. I can get a high school certificate but not one permitting me to teach in the elementary grades. The education laws have been changed. I will have to have art, public school music, and a course in the teaching of hygiene.

Imagine my having to have art and music. My children did not know a single song learned from a teacher. They've never had a drawing lesson in their lives. What I find especially galling is the fact that for the last several years the school has been taught by an old man who had not even a high school education, but because he made a first class certificate years ago when they were still having teachers' examinations, some kink in the law lets him continue teaching even though he has never heard of art.

July 24

I went to school long enough to check the textbooks and dismiss. I suppose we will have to go into Somerset and see the superintendent and turn in my record book and so forth, but that can wait until I catch up on my gardening, blackberry picking and apple canning.

Last night Harold and I were awfully blue but tonight we feel much better. We might as well do what we planned to do all last winter: sell off about half the cattle early this fall—they are a good price—we have our major items of food, fuel, shelter, and provender for the animals in sight for another year. The money I made from teaching was to have gone for improvements on the farm and the payment of half the mortgage. The mortgage can wait and many of the improvements, such as fixing the house and a good deal of fencing, can be done with what materials we have on hand.

Mostly I am more angry than grieved. I've boiled off and on all day, that is when I had the time. The sad-eyed plowman was here working and I had to get dinner for him and Harold and then do some work in my late garden that refused to wait any longer.

July 25

A day wasted; tired I am but I feel at peace with the world and relieved like a person with acute constipation after a good session in a toilet. I wrote a nice sensible five page letter to this lady who has been 'investigating' my case; there is no venom in the letter, nor anything that is the least unladylike. What puzzles me is why in the world that woman told me in the first place I could get the certificate renewed. She ought to have known something about the requirements. At least I got some satisfaction in mailing my letter to her.

Harold greatly protested my sending it. They would, he said, upon the receipt of it, not only refuse to give me an elementary certificate, but take away the high school one as well.

July 30

After a pleasant blackberry jaunt we came home late and tired; a neighbor brought the mail, apd I guess I will change all my plans for a big canning season. There were two letters from the certification woman. In one she said I had hurt her feelings in my letter; in the other she told me she was giving me a teacher's certificate for either elementary or high school, said certificate good for life.

August *(exact date indecipherable)*

Yesterday, another day wasted—or at least such was the prospect when we left early in Henry (the Ford) for the county seat—a teachers' meeting and pay day. I left my monthly report at the superintendent's office and went to the meeting, dreary enough it was; no word of the million and one problems that confront all of us teaching alone in little schoolhouses wrestling with these damnable textbooks, the children, parents—amiable enough, but not too conscientious about sending children to school on time—worrying over a barefooted six year olds in snake-infested playgrounds, pinning up clothes, iodining and bandaging cuts, pricking boils, pinning up hair so they won't be cross eyed, trying to teach them to eat tomatoes and cabbage when their health books advise oranges and spinach—and they can't get oranges and spinach—keeping them out of the trees, not letting them chase the mules or ride the pigs or catch them by the tails, keeping the hornets out of the house, fighting the flies in a house without screens, trying desperately and always failing to see the world through their eyes and wondering in a dumb fuddled way what my Earl thinks about when he tells me that Sir Francis Drake went to sea and robbed the Spanish for gold enough to go around the world. Earl never saw the sea. He never saw a piece of gold and Spain to him is a blob on a little map I cut from the *New York Times*.

But at the teachers' meeting there was never a word of all this or anything pertaining to the actual physical basis of the county's system; the superintendent looking into far corners of his mind and holding quite still a sheaf of papers while three different people—job holders from the state and in no way connected with the educational system—explained and re-explained the steps we should take if there were any in our communities deserving of some one of the various forms of workmen's compensations recently put into force by the state. Dusgusted, I finally left.

August 14

The days seem shortening fast, the sun slipping southward around the rim of the hill; but still enough daylight to do a little after school. I have about 65 quarts of apples canned, some berries, and am only started on my tomato canning, about 14 quarts. And I would like at least 50 or 60 or more if I can find the time. Time is a bigger problem than tomatoes.

Trying to teach a one-room rural school, even a small one such as this, demands continual stretching of time. Four o'clock comes and I have not done half the things I wanted to do. Maybe we didn't get to sing—my voice is of the poorest and I know little of public school music—but I am determined that they shall know at least "America" and "My Old Kentucky Home" before I am finished with them. Then I like to tell my youngest—primer, first and second—a story during language period every day, and that takes more time than the schedule allows. They are so backward in all arithmetical combinations. None except the seventh grade knew that they lived in Pulaski County in the United States of America, or how to tell time or read a calendar or that a man named Franklin Delano Roosevelt is president of these United States— these children not knowing the name of their country, its president, its flag or anything of its geography or its history, scarcely speaking or comprehending the language as it is spoken by the majority of its citizens.

I look at these children many times and wonder on them, ponder over their futures as men and women...

© Estate of Harriette Simpson Arnow 1988.

Photo by Russell Lee. From the University of Kentucky Archives.

A Lesson in Commodities

Dot Jackson

Hothouse Township, N.C.

We got a letter at our school today. Well it came to McAllister's Store, where most everybody gets their mail because feeling about the goverment like some people do, a U.S. mailbox don't stand too much of a chance to keep astanding. So not a lot of people keep a mailbox.

Mr. Kisselberg drives around on his mail route in his T-Model Ford, he brings the mail out of Culberson post office which is about four miles from Hothouse. He goes around and carries their mail to people who have too hard of a time to come to the store to get it. And he picks up their corn and takes it to the mill on the running board of his automobile and brings back the meal the next day too. He will carry you some place if you really have to get there. But most people's mail he leaves at McAllister's Store and the old man John McAllister hands it out.

Mr. Kisselberg could not drive to our school anyway. His T-Model would not cross the footlog. Sometimes when it is ice we nearly cannot get across it our ownselves.

So anyway Miss Louella who is our teacher stopped by the store this morning because the school was out of matches to light the stove. And Mr. John give her this letter. It was to the Principal of Johnson School, Culberson, N.C.

Which is something else. Till now I don't know if anybody had thought who was the principal. Is Miss Louella? She teaches fourth grade through the eighth. After that you have to go to Murphy. Or is it Miss Ruth Carroll? She teaches first through third, on the other side of the partition.

But if we have to have a principal to open up this letter here today, Miss Ruth is out. She lost holt of a laurel limb climbing up the schoolhouse path the other day, and she scooted backwards almost to the creek, banging up her bones along the way. Some of the big boys made a packsaddle to tote her back down across the corn field and got Uncle Tommy to hitch up his mules and carry her home. She is all bunged up, her arm is in a sling. As yet she is not come back. I love Miss Ruth. I feel bad for all of this.

So Miss Louella takes the charge and opens up the envelope. It is from the United States goverment. She reads it to us.

"Dear Principal:" it says. "Due to the poverty and poor nutrition of your students we will be sending Commodities to your school lunchroom. The first shipment has been made and will arrive within a few days. Instructions for preparation will be included."

I can't remember if it is the letter says something about "ignorance" of if it

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

is Miss Louella says it about the letter. But anyway, at first we do not know what to think.

And then there is this other TVA kid, his name is Kyle and he is like me, he has spent most of his first nine years living in the flats, where our daddies had to work until the TVA. Kyle starts to giggle. I say it first. "Commode-ities!" I say. But I am giggling so much nobody but Kyle understands me. I think Miss Louella maybe catches on. She looks like she is trying not to laugh when she shakes the hickory at Kyle and me.

We have been around, Kyle and me. We have lived in houses where there is juice-lights and water pipes and you can hear The Lone Ranger and the Grand Ol' Opry on the radio. How can these other kids know how funny it is, us getting these Commodities, when they have never in their whole entire lives seen a Commode?

But in the Lunch Room? It sounds sort of nasty, to me.

The Lunch Room part itself is sort of strange. We have Miss Louella's room and Miss Ruth's, cut off from it. We have a wood stove and a woodpile around it in each room. We have hooks along the wall to hang our coats and a bookshelf, and a shelf for the water bucket, and a shelf for our dinner pails. We have five rows of double desks in our room. There is a big girl sits in the desk with me which I will not gò into her name because if I say anything about her in this world she will beat me up. She says so. but the Lunch Room part, nobody knows.

Anyway we are too excited about a package of something coming to us from the U.S. Goverment, and we can't keep our minds good on our fractions and our decimal points. So Miss Louella takes up a book we like called Stories From The Operas, and reads to us about a man named Lo-Hen-Grin who marries a girl named Elsa with flowing golden hair. It was a bad mistake. When Elsa tries to get Lo-Hen-Grin to tell her who his mama and daddy are, and why they didn't come to the wedding, he gets mad and hops on his swan and paddles away forever.

And then we quit for dinner. Nearly everybody brings their dinner. A couple of the big kids walk back down the mountain to McAllister's Store and get Nehi Chocolate drinks and banana flips sometimes. But everybody else goes to the spring at the edge of the woods, and we get our milk jars that were warm from the cow when we started out this morning, and they are freezing now from being in the spring. We sit on the bank of the branch and eat our slab meat biscuits and boiled eggs and baked sweet potatoes, split down the middle with chunks of fresh butter stuck down inside, and our apples and fried pies, and wonder among ourselves about The Commodities.

December 8, 1941

Japan dropped a bomb on our boys yesterday. Aunt Rosie heard it on her battery radio and told everybody that come along the road. It was so much excitement over it that we had most forgot about The Commodities. We had a prayer meeting out in the yard this morning not too different than we nearly always do before we take up school. It will be sometimes that we will sing "Amazing Grace," and "I Shall Not Be Moved," and somebody will say Scripture, and somebody will start the shouting, and it will be a while before things quieten down enough that we can go inside.

But it is quieter today; some of our boys are nearly big enough to have to go to war. My brother is 18. We pray.

And we have just got inside and in our seats when we see out the window an old man and a mule come up the path. There are two boxes, slung across the mule. Miss Louella and the big boys go out and help the old man get them down. "U.S. Department of Agriculture," the boxes say on them.

The Commodities.

We all gather around while Miss Louella pries one open:

A case of evaporated milk.

She opens the other:

A case of unsweetened grapefruit juice.

There is a packet inside, with pictures of children with their chests poked out and leg-bones bowed from rickets. There are pictures of toothless stringy-headed children with pellagra. There are instructions:

"Each child in your lunch program is to consume one serving of each Commodity each day," the letter says.

"Well..." Miss Louella says. She is no more sure about this than the rest of us.

But she borrows a Barlow from one of the big boys and stabs the tops of the cans. She gives a can of milk to Jack Cole and a can of grapefruit juice to Randall Carter, and she takes up the dipper from the water pail, and they start the rounds.

Down the rows they go. Jacks fills the dipper with that canned milk, and the victim has to drink. Randall fills the dipper with that sour grapefruit juice, and the victim has to drink that, too.

The expressions and the noises make us hope they will run out before our turn. But they don't. Punch - Crunch go the cans. Kids are running for the doorway, with clabber running down their chins.

It is our first lesson in life as the Mountain Poor.

CODA

December, 1971

A nutrition expert from Michigan is lecturing to college students about the problems of her work in the North Carolina Hills. "You cannot ;imagine the things I have seen," says the oracle. "I have seen children in Madison County who have never tasted orange juice."

And I think but don't say, Lady, I have seen children from Michigan who have never picked a blackberry, never used a rock to knock a perfect apple from a tree, never waded in an icy creek to fill the upturned bosom of a shirt with fox grapes or sprung sweet chinquapins from the burrs.

If God, I say, had meant for orange juice to be as indispensable as blood, these ridges would have been covered with orange trees. Or we would all be moving to Florida. Instead of the other way around.

Dot Jackson, our correspondent from Six Mile, S.C., is a reporter for the ***Greenville News-Piedmont.*** *She says that "Lesson in Commodities" is based on "an incident that happened while my daddy was working for the TVA—as many second thoughts as I have about TVA now, it got us briefly out of the flats. The account is as accurate as childhood memories that go back 47 years are apt to be."*

Highlander: No Ordinary School, 1932-1962

by John M. Glen

University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, 1988
$30.00 (hardcover)

Guy L. Osborne

With a democratic goal, we are in a position to fight anything that gets in the way, whether it be totalitarian communism, or fascism or monopoly dominated capitalism.

—Highlander Folk School, Statement of Purpose

I am a good dreamer.

—Myles Horton

Times change. In the South, it may be more accurate to say times are changed, by somebody, over the objections of somebody else.

Like the South in general, Appalachia has seen its share of social change. The last 50 years have been witness to unmistakable progress toward equality and increased democracy in the community and workplace, although not without much controversy and resistance.

John Glen has written a book about these changes and about the contributions made by a group of people, a place and an idea known as Highlander. Winner of the Appalachian Award, the book examines the founding of Highlander Folk School near Chattanooga in 1932, the early, fledgling work of staff with unions and farm cooperatives, its influential role in the civil rights movement and the unrelenting hounding by segregationists, opponents of organized labor and others who feared Highlander was a communist training school. An epilogue outlines events after the state closed Highlander in 1961, as the school reopened in Knoxville the following year and then moved to outside New Market, Tenn., where it remains in operation today.

Glen describes the people of Highlander as a small assortment of idealists, mostly outsiders, many highly educated, who came to the southern Appalachian mountains to help common people fight for economic and political power over their own destinies. Highlander was established in an era when such idealists often used religious language of the social gospel and political language of socialism to describe the better world for which they worked. They shared John Dewey's optimism for the capacity of education to transform society and make it better.

Myles Horton, a native of west Tennessee, is the central personality of Highlander. In his youth, he did community service on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in rural areas of Appalachian Tennessee. He returned there to start Highlander after seminary training at Union Seminary, study in sociology at the University of Chicago and travel abroad to see the folk schools of Denmark and their curriculum for teaching participatory skills of democracy. While staff turnover at Highlander was always common, Horton stayed on for the duration and, though retired for some time, lives there still.

The original home of Highlander was in Grundy County, on land donated by a wealthy benefactor. The school itself never consisted of more than a few buildings, residences and a library. After the state confiscated Highlander's property, all physical assets were sold at auction for less than $50,000.

As a place of culture, however, Highlander was rich. Unlike most other efforts by outsiders to help people of the region, Highlander promoted respect for Appalachian music, crafts and folkways. Oral history, singing and storytelling were common features of its educational programs. Integrated meetings brought southern white and black culture together, promoting respect and pride for both.

The illustrious friends of the school added to the rich culture. Eleanor Roosevelt and Pete Seeger, for example, closely identified themselves with Highlander. Dr. Martin Luther King, Andrew Young and other black leaders of the civil rights movement attended workshops at Highlander and supported its mission.

The idea of Highlander can be summed up in three parts. First, for America to live up to its democratic ideals, the working class, rural mountain people and people of color must have access to economic and political power. Secondly, popular education is a potent force for making American democracy

Courtesy of Highlander Center.

Myles Horton looks on as Sheriff Elston Clay padlocks main building of the Highlander Folk School in Grundy County, Tenn., 1959.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

work, as illustrated by Highlander's citizenship schools in the 1950s which resulted in large numbers of black people registering to vote. Thirdly, America can be a better place, can be *made* to be a better place, by the people themselves. In fact, it must be by the people themselves. Paternalistic liberal solutions to local problems imposed by supposed experts from Washington (or wherever) are to be resisted as just as destructive to democracy as paternalistic conservative solutions. In this respect, Highlander can be seen as standing for a self-help approach through education decades before it became fashionable to discuss such things during the Reagan presidency.

Running through all three aspects of the idea of Highlander is a certain sociological view of society which emphasizes social class as a fundamental explanatory device. Change is possible only when the status quo is destablilized through a crisis situation. The crisis need have nothing to do with violence. Rather, it is a state of heightened awareness of a social injustice coupled with an expectation that change is possible, occurring at a time when democratic values are brought into sharp focus, as during a strike or boycott. At least in its early days, therefore, Highlander saw crisis as an essential prerequisite to social change occurring along class boundaries. And those whose privileged status is threatened by change can be expected to resist it, so that class conflict is inevitable.

There have been other books about Highlander. Glen's will be remembered as a coherent account of the school's first 30 years composed out of what must have been a haystack's worth of notes, clippings and other archival bits and pieces. Altogether, he cites over 2,000 sources in his notes, including interviews and a variety of published materials.

The book also permits a better understanding of Highlander's controversial reputation.

Although Glen finds no support for any official communist connection, there was enough utopian and socialist rhetoric by staff and supporters early on to alarm many reasonable people as to what the school was really up to. Of course, socialism ain't communism, but in the South this distinction often eludes people. Glen is clear, however, in attributing most of the hysteria over Highlander to racial bigotry, vested interests among union leadership and similar sentiments.

Not everyone will like the book. Both devotees and opponents of Highlander can complain that their perspectives are inadequately developed, and with some justification. The problem may be that Glen's historical approach, grounded in the empiricism of social science, does not lend itself to communicating passion.

More importantly, Glen misses a good chance to assess the utility of Highlander's sociological view and methods. Critics might ask what is the lesson of Highlander for a class analysis approach to society's problems. The book is suggestive that the approach is too simplistic. Without further exploration, however, this issue remains obscure.

Then, too, by focusing on the school's operation only through the early 1960s, the book understates Highlander's more recent and successful work in combating toxic wastes, in conducting studies of land ownership and in helping to organize cottage industries and educational cooperatives in Appalachia. Just this past December, Highlander sponsored the composing of a book on popular education featuring Horton and the renowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. In contrast to the impression given by the book's epilogue, Highlander and Myles Horton are very much alive and well, thank you.

And controversial. A recent feature article in the Knoxville *News-Sentinel* commemorating Highlander's contributions to the civil rights movement drew a loud and angry response from some readers. The famous picture from the 1950s of Myles Horton and Dr. Martin Luther King at a "communist training school" reappeared in a racist tract widely distributed in 1986 as an effort to discredit official recognition of King's birthday. Despite the fact that Highlander was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (the year Lech Walesa won) and that Myles Horton served as consultant to the State of Tennessee in establishing its literacy training program, such controversy and opposition continue.

Thus, John Glen may not have written the definitive work on Highlander, but he has provided a well-researched, valuable addition to the literature on the school's historic place in Southern activism. In a time when such best sellers as Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* and Alan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* lament the passing from our culture of idealism and commitment to community, Glen's book deserves careful reading. For there is a place on a hillside in Appalachia where idealism and community have never passed away. It is a place called Highlander. And it is no ordinary school.

Larry Osborne is chairman of the psychology department at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., which is located in the same county as Highlander. He writes on Appalachian issues related to teaching, rural adult education and childhood development.

Highlander Center Today

Highlander Center still believes in education. "If we don't educate the community, things will never change in Washington," says Mark Harris, Highlander's current administrator.

Environmental health and economics are the major issues that the Highlander-trained grassroots leaders want to confront in their communities in the 80s.

Highlander also sponsors cultural and political programs such as a recent trip to Nicaragua and a workshop of music, dancing and stories in Eastern Kentucky.

For more information about this non-profit organization, write Highlander Education and Research Center, Route 3, Box 370, New Market, Tenn. 37820, or call 615-933-3443.

Are You Opinionated?

Now and Then *needs you as a reviewer of Appalachian books, periodicals, films and records. Send information about yourself and your area of interest (Poetry, fiction, history, photography, crafts, fine art, theater, activism, education, children's literature, etc.) to the editor.*

Crum

by Lee Maynard

Washington Square Press
New York
$6.95 (paperback)

Denise Giardina

Just when you thought it was safe to be from the mountains, when reruns of the *Beverly Hillbillies* are hidden away on Sunday afternoons and cultural diversity is fashionable, along comes a book like *Crum*. Not since the movie *Deliverance* have I encountered a more vicious portrayal of Appalachian mountain people.

Crum is the work of Lee Maynard, who spent his adolescent years in the real-life Crum, W. Va., where his father was a high school football coach. Crum in both fact and fiction is located on the Tug Fork River, which borders Kentucky. The nameless narrator describes the setting on the very first page.

"When I was growing up there, the population of Crum, W.Va., was 219 human beings, two sub-humans, a few platoons of assorted dogs, at least one cat that I paid attention to, a retarded mule and a very vivid image of Crash Corrigan. At first there were no whores, but later on I got to watch one in the making.

"'Crum — unincorporated' the road sign said at the edge of town. It should have said 'unnecessary.' The place is located deep in the bowels of the Appalachians, on the bank of the Tug River, the urinary tract of the mountains. Across the flowing urine is Kentucky.

"Life in Crum was one gay, mad whirl of abject ignorance, emotions spilling over emotions, sex spilling over love, and sometimes blood spilling over everything."

This opening is a good indication of things to come. The novel is littered with references to human excretion and descriptions of sex devoid of love and heavy on smarm. "Across the river was Kentucky, a mysterious land of pig fuckers," we are informed, and the word "Kentucky" is ever after accompanied by this dubious description. If the reader is supposed to be shocked, boredom is the actual response.

The characters in *Crum* are as disgusting as the language. There is Preacher Piney, who molests women as he baptizes them. Benny Musser, who regularly exposes himself and masturbates in school. Ralph Parsons, "big, mean and not too smart." Luke, the restaurant owner, who picks his nose and wipes his fingers on the apron with which he holds hot dog buns.

Then there are the women. Women and girls are first described by what their bodies look like and how well they copulate. According to the narrator, "Half the girls in school who rode the bus home fucked some guy in the back seat on the way." Ruby Harmon is most notable for removing her bra and rubbing against the narrator in class. Elvira Prince is described as having "a better all round body" than Ruby. Elvira's mother strips in front of the narrator, then urinates. Yvonne, the only "good girl" at the book's beginning, prostitutes herself in order to leave Crum.

Even the high school English teacher merits the following introduction: "Miss Thatcher was short, plump, plain, clean and smelled good. She also had the most delicious tits we had ever seen...there was no way you could completely hide a pair like hers...they led the way down the hallway whenever she left the classroom, and they were the first things to enter the room when she returned." As a woman and a writer, I'm not sure whether to be more offended by the sexism of this novel or the sophomoric style.

I was asked to supply an advertising blurb after reading *Crum* in galley form. I refused, as did at least one other Appalachian writer I've spoken with. Still, seven laudatory quotations adorn the cover of this book. Noted writers such as William McPherson, Bret Lott, and John Calvin Batchelor have lent their names in praise of *Crum*. But none of the seven is a woman. Nor are any Appalachian writers quoted.

And what these males from outside the region have to say is telling. "The story of a hillbilly childhood spent in such deprivation that only the make-believe of a child's eye makes it believable," one says. "Too authentic to doubt," adds another. Sure. What is most offensive about this book is that the coal mining region it pretends to depict in truth has its share of problems. But the troubles of the region are here sensationalized and the inhabitants dehumanized. *Crum* reads as though it were written in an adolescent snit over past slights, a belated attempt at revenge against a place where the author passed a few unhappy growing-up years.

There is nothing wrong with the book that a good case of writer's block wouldn't have cured.

Denise Giardina wrote about early strife in the coalfields in her latest novel, ***Storming Heaven.***

Brier, His Book
and
His First, Best Country

by Jim Wayne Miller

Gnomon Press
P.O. Box 475
Frankfort, Ky. 40602-0475

Brier	***1988***	$ 8.50 (paper)
		$16.00 (cloth)
Country	***1987***	$ 7.50 (paper)

Pat Verhulst

Jim Wayne Miller's literary alter ego, the Brier, has never been a favorite with this reviewer; he seemed to depend too much on bourbon, fishing stories and swapping jokes with the other good old boys. He spelled feller and holler with an *r*, to show that he was really *country*, and he flaunted the hard-drinking macho stereotype that has made the real-life manifestations of the type so difficult for the women of these mountains to survive.

Besides, every reader knows that Brier is really the voice of Dr. Miller, a man with an advanced degree in a foreign language and a job at a University, so the country witticisms sometimes seem a little bit forced. In *Brier, His Book*, Miller's protagonist still displays some of these less-than-convincing characteristics, particularly in a poem called "On Trammel Creek." Brier shares some bourbon and a lot of feller feeling with a stranger, in a dry county, on the church steps.

Drinking makes him a little bit sentimental, I guess, because the Brier muses

how understandings between
countrymen
could be stronger than the laws
of any state; how easily the laws
were broken, dry twigs underfoot.

Anyone can sympathize with a teacher or businessman who loves to imagine himself escaping from the office or the ivory tower to play outlaw with the real people out in the unspoiled rural countryside. But something in this reader wants to tug on the sleeve of Brier's down home denim jacket and whisper, "Listen, Buddy, this guy *knows* you are some kind of a schoolteacher; no use pretending to be someone you are not."

This is not to say that a poet must write only from his own autobiography, or stick to his own station in life. Certainly the imagination permits each of us to enjoy many identities, and the use of a mask has been well developed and defended by many fine poets, Yeats, John Berryman, and William Carlos Williams among them. But there always seems to be a hidden note of condescension, and perhaps of apology, when the poet makes a big point of being just as common and earthy as those picturesque characters he claims to identify with.

But these two recent publications of Miller's have forced me to take a longer and slower look at his work, and with very few lapses, the poet seems to have achieved an increasing depth and credibility. In "Cistern," part of a longer poem called "Country People," he produces an unsentimental vernacular style without any tricks of spelling or diction:

The last ones left me uncovered
and close to dry,
looking up at a January sky.
Do something.
Send rain,
cover me over,
or get out of my light.
Don't just stand there
kicking trash in my eye.

Rhythmic and spare, disillusioned and comic, passages like these convey Miller's love for the land and his sorrow in the face of abandoned farmyards and empty farmhouses. A similar style, a mixture of rueful wit and serious protest, enlivens "Small Farms Disappearing in Tennessee," one of the best poems in this collection.

A number of small Tennessee farms
were traced
to a land-developer's safe-deposit
box
In a mid-state bank after a bank
official
entered the vault to investigate
roosters
crowing and cows bawling inside the
box.

The story is no joke at all, but the lightness of the style makes it easier to read; this is the task Miller sets for himself in "The Brier Plans a Mountain Vision Center."

He'd recommend exchanging rose-
colored glasses for
poems that made gentle contact with
the mind's eye,
like a soft lens, lining up then with
now, now with
then, news with news that stays news,
like front and
rear gun sights.

The combination of understatement and implied threat in this passage is particularly effective. And the desire to awaken and magnify awareness, in the minds of the readers, but also in the mind of the writer, is a recurring theme. In "A Turning," and in several other poems, the speaker "Comes suddenly awake" at night, his mind teeming with thoughts, visions, or, simply, happiness. Attempting to record this experience, and help his readers share it, is one mark of a really valuable poet.

"Brier Coming of Age" displays this theme of awakening at its best and much more. Bitterly funny and direct, this poems demonstrates Miller's ability to edge his style toward the comic, away from the poignant or inane. A completely satisfying poem, it is a match for the most overtly political piece in the collection, "The Country of Conscience." Dedicated to Czeslaw Milosz, it treats the theme of the poet in exile, and keeps returning to a concept that prevails in the best of Miller's writings:

There are two histories.
One smells like apples in the cellar,
like cedar shavings.

The other reeks of ideology
that hangs in the brain like turpen-
tine
and thinner.

. . .

There are two of every country,
there are two histories.
There are two of every man.

There are two or more of every man, and every woman, too; and it seems to me that Miller is at his best when he writes with the full ambiguity of his situation in mind, as an educated and well-traveled man who appreciates the traditions of his native region, and who wants to awaken his readers so that they can join him in trying to preserve them.

That sense of ambivalence and ambiguity enriches Miller's story, *His First, Best Country*. The narrator is a teacher, a scholar, and a writer, who falls in love with a foul-mouthed, vulnerable woman who loves country music. If he mocks the simple-minded lyrics of a Conway Twitty song, she reminds him that "Conway knows some things you don't!" Roma is a stereotype, in a way: a hard-bitten female redneck, a Honky-Tonk Angel who has been "rode hard and put up wet" and has "the saddest eyes" the narrator has ever seen. He refers to her as "a deep well of a woman" and a "flyrod of a woman," and he seems to see her more as a means than as an end in herself—more a sweet curvy road home than an individual woman.

But the reader likes Roma, and the narrator lets her humble him again and again, reminding him that life is more complicated than the ideas he has learned from books, and that the country and gospel songs he has always scorned may contain some of the secrets he has been searching for.

The story failed to send this reviewer out to buy the complete works of Conway Twitty, but it did make me respect Jim Wayne Miller's writing a lot more than

before. It's been a long time since any writer could write a story about a man falling slowly in love with a woman with any conviction at all, and this old-fashioned love story is a pleasure for that reason. Even better is the tension Miller creates between his narrator's view of life and Roma's.

> *She showed him his contradictions. She pointed out how, in some things he'd written he'd praised the rooted rural life, yet he'd flitted around, in universities, in Europe, and knew his people more as an idea than as individuals.*

With Roma as his tutor, the narrator begins to change - he remembers his love for the mountains rested largely on his love for water, "and realized his old love was actually a twin love - of women and water. For they merged in his mind." A woman reading may wince at the abstraction and generalization this statement involves; but Miller launches off from this into a rhapsodic hymn to women, water, and love, that is quite lovely and thoroughly convincing.

Meditating about love leads him to reflect on the changes within himself, and these are conveyed in a beautifully subtle passage that illustrates the charm of this story:

> *He remembered reading somewhere about how the water of a lake separated out into layers of varying temperatures during the summer. Then in the fall, when the top layer cooled, the lake turned over - the top layer sank to the bottom, the bottom layer rose to the top. He was a lake turning over. All he had been most recently was sinking. All that was subdued in him, his past in this place, was rising to the surface.*

Roma has helped him come home, and he ends the story with a rousing gospel conclusion. It's a fine story, and it marks a new strength in Miller's writing. We can all look forward to more.

Pat Verhulst teaches English and writing at Mars Hill College.

Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War

by Gavin Wright

Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1988

$9.95 (Paperback reissue of 1986 hardcover)

Larry D. Gossett

Gavin Wright achieves something with this book that has long been needed. He has built a bridge between the disciplines of economics and history through the medium of comparative economic history.

Wright issues strong warnings to economists that the application of modern assumptions and characteristics to the past may result in gross errors. He then warns historians that ignoring sometimes complex economic theories may create misleading historical conclusions. Wright then integrates economic theory with the history of the South and present a fresh interpretation of its economic development.

He also accomplishes a remarkable feat in giving us a volume that is easy to read and understand while at the same time incorporating the graphs, tables and figures.

He presents detailed evidence that the economy of the Old South was separate and distinct from the national and world economies. All of the traditionally-argued issues—the impact of slavery, emancipation, sluggish post-war economic development in the South, continued low income levels for Southern workers and even the more recent boom times in the Southern sunbelt—can be explained, according to Wright, by understanding the South's distinct labor market and regional economy. But its legacy did not end with the Civil War. Slavery had produced a source of laborers, i.e. slaves, without allowing for a competitive labor market as existed elsewhere. When emancipation destroyed the slave wealth of the Southern labor lords, it created a new class of landlords implicitly interested in maintaining the cheapest hired labor. The pressure from within the South to keep wages low restricted labor's mobility to move elsewhere (though the Great Migration of 1915 weakens this argument somewhat), reduced incentives for other labor to move South, discouraged capital investment and industrialization, and maintained a labor market that did not interact nationally since it was stagnant and non-competitive. The idea that the problem originated within the South belies C. Van Woodward's concept of a Southern "colonial economy" dominated and held back by outside interests.

The Great Depression served as an equalizer for the region's distinctiveness, however, and Wright sees the South finally rejoining the Union not in 1865 but in the 1930s. The New Deal, the demands for goods and services following the two world wars and the burgeoning civil rights movement in the South all contributed to the destruction of the region's distinctive and retarded labor economy and created the "revolution" that led to the New South.

Wright's analysis may appear at first glance to be limited and even monocausal, but it is far from this. His insights are provocative, powerful and far-reaching. Economic historians of the South cannot ignore the arguments he presents in this well-written analytical work.

Larry D. Gossett is a graduate student at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La., where he is a candidate for a Ph.D. in American history. His dissertation topic is "The History of the Tennessee State Prison System, 1830-1986."

Feud: Hatfields, McCoys and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900

by Altina L. Waller

University
of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill and London, 1988
$32.50 (cloth) $12.50 (paperback)

Richard Blaustein

Altina L. Waller's highly detailed, rigorous re-examination of the infamous Hatfield-McCoy feud points out the difficulty of separating history and legend. As Waller observes in her introduction, the popular stereotypes surrounding this notorious event have largely overshadowed its actual history:

> *We all know of the Hatfields and McCoys, for we have encountered them in comic strips, popular song, movies, and television. Indeed, they have become such an entrenched part of mythology and folklore that many Americans are surprised to discover that the feud actually happened and that the feudists were real people. Ironically, the extraordinary endurance of the folkloric legend that has grown up around the Hatfields and McCoys has obscured consideration of the feud as a serious historical event.*

Waller's objective in this study is to demonstrate that earlier interpretations of the Hatfield-McCoy feud were based on erroneous premises. She attempts to prove that the feud was neither a manifestation of familial violence supposedly ingrained in southern mountain culture nor an extension of guerilla warfare which continued in various sections of the Border South after Appomattox. She views it as a localized expression of conflict between an older self-sufficient hunting and farming lifestyle and a new mercantile and industrial order which was penetrating the Appalachian hinterlands following the Civil War.

Waller marshalls an impressive array of documentation to show that the antagonists in the feud were not clearly opposed along family lines (there were Hatfields who supported McCoys, and vice-versa) nor were they unequivocally divided by loyalties to the Union and Confederacy, although she does not completely dismiss that possibility. Instead she suggests that the mountain feuds of the post-Civil War period were primarily caused by overpopulation and overcrowding. There was diminished opportunity for land ownership because of the tradition of dividing land equally among heirs. The conflict was also accentuated by the rise of the southern lumber industry and the general movement of Appalachia into a global market economy.

Essentially, then, Waller sees feuding as a violent expression of the frustrations of Appalachian people experiencing declining social and economic autonomy. From this perspective, Devil Anse Hatfield and his followers are portrayed as defenders of local autonomy in opposition to the McCoys and their friends who supported the entry of powerful outside interests into the Appalachian region:

> *To this new elite, Devil Anse represented parochialism, stubborn independence, backwardness, and ultimately resistance to progress. Their participation in the attack on him was more a rejection of mountain culture than a personal vendetta. Ironically, Devil Anse had come to stand for the ignorant obstructionist instead of the ambitious entrepreneur he really was. His defeat was necessary less for economic gain than for the inevitable march into Appalachia of what they had come to think of as civilization.*

The sensationalistic journalism which exploited the Hatfield-McCoy feud helped to establish the comic-savage hillbilly images that still shape our perceptions of Appalachian people a hundred years later. As Waller asserts, the feuds served to accentuate the supposed inferiority of Appalachian culture and the consequent need for cultural uplift programs by outside agents of civilization, including teachers, ministers, nurses and industrialists:

> *The mountaineer's way of life—their flexibility and relaxed schedules, their lack of ambition, and their excessive independence—was seen as an obstacle to cultural enlightenment as well as economic progress. Appalachians, like the Indians before them, would have to alter their entire way of life and culture to fit in, or they would have to be removed. The feud was a convenient way of emphasizing the point that mountaineers were savages in need of modernization, both economic and cultural.*

Thus the stage was set for the establishment of mission schools, rural clinics and folklife revival efforts as well as relatively recent developments including the War On Poverty and the Appalachian Regional Commission. These movements followed the continued loss of social and economic autonomy by Appalachians and their increasing dependence on the vagaries of national and international markets.

Culturally speaking, one of the enduring consequences of the post-Civil War feuds has been the perpetuation of an ambiguous sense of identity which modern Appalachians are still trying to sort out. Indeed, the development of Appalachian Studies as a field of study can itself be seen as an attempt to come to terms with the complex sense of pride and shame which colors the self-perceptions of southern mountain people.

Though difficult reading in places, this work deserves the serious attention of anyone concerned with the Appalachian region and its people.

Richard Blaustein directs the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at ETSU.

These Are Our Voices

The Story of Oak Ridge

1942-1970

Edited by James Overholt

Children's Museum of Oak Ridge,

Oak Ridge, Tenn., 1987

$19. 95 (hardcover)

Charles Moore

Voices is a collection of 66 essays by 44 writers about the history of Oak Ridge. Each was directly affected by the Oak Ridge project. Many lived there during the war years. Here is a refreshing, original look at people and change as described by the participants.

As an outsider, I always thought Oak Ridge had been here as long as any other eastern town. I was surprised to learn that Oak Ridge was a planned city built in less than a year, in 1942 (like Los Alamos, N.M., and Hanford, Wash.) During World War II, the uranium for the first atomic bomb was manufactured here as part of the top secret program called the Manhattan Project.

We know now just how close the Germans were to perfecting the bomb and the crucial part played by Oak Ridge in building the ultimate weapon. The book describes how people were recruited to this instant city from across the nation and lived in somewhat chaotic conditions: the housing was less than wonderful, streets were muddy, there were no phones in the houses and newspapers were censored.

Those authors who came from outside the region write that the East Tennesseans were friendly, hard working and generally made the newcomers feel at home under very rigorous conditions. At the same time the writers report some resentment of the intrusion, the displacements, the secrets and the arrogance sometime displayed by the scientific group.

Some of the authors were those whose homes and farms were appropriated to make way for Oak Ridge. The uprooting left a bad taste, but as Overholt remarks, the time of war caused a lot of uprooting. Some East Tennesseans must have felt picked on. John Rice Irwin, who founded the Museum of Appalachia in Norris, had already been moved once to make way for Fontana Lake "I remember [upon receiving notice to move again] the anguish of my father and mother." Jane Alderfer remembered the difficulties that came with eviction from the family farm, "...because of war shortages, few vehicles were available to move household possessions, farm implements, harvested crops, and farm stock."

Perhaps the benefits, of building a weapon that saved American lives and creating a city that was to become very prosperous, surpassed the cost. *Voices* gives you the chance to make your own decision.

Jim Wayne Miller, in his essay uses a key word, "provisonal," to describe the phenomonon of Oak Ridge. Except that this provisional town became permanent.

In the post-war years Oak Ridge became a modern, progressive city. Oak Ridge had the first integrated schools in Tennessee, (in 1955-56). The Arts Council got its start without government funding. At one time the population topped 75,000.

In 1964, Margaret Mead made a momentous trip to Oak Ridge. Mead considered the high schoolers conceited, inconsiderate and "blase about our city's role in the history of mankind." She berated the children as "young aristocrats." One of the essayists, Bonnie Lee Dingus, ponders in her essay if Mead had been correct. But Dingus notes a paradox. The "hillbilly" image became applied to the "former" outsiders by their association with Tennessee. "The heritage of East Tennessee no longer escapes me, or my family," she discovered. Yet, Oak Ridge was a world unto itself. It had its own newspaper, churches, telephone exchange, schools and cliches. The people from the surrounding countryside where not always included.

The contributors are a diverse group including poet Marilou Awiakta, Georgia potter Charles Counts, housewife Ruby Daniel, ETSU graduate Thomas Thompson, one of the engineers who was in charge of the Manhattan project, General K.D. Nichols, and scientist Alvin Weinberg.

Voices is organized into two time frames, "Wartime" and "Post-War." Writers contributed verse, essays and even a short play. From government secrecy to building the churches, from movies to the telephone system, from the frontier experience to the politics of science, authors talked about every aspect of their lives at Oak Ridge.

Voices is easy to read and contains many very well-chosen photographs. I would have liked to read more about the scientists and what they thought about the results of their work, not just about the immediate lives lost or saved but about the dawning of the Nuclear Age.

Courtesy of the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge.

Y-12 plant, 1945. This was where the uranium for the first atomic bomb was refined.

Overholt admits the book was not intended to be comprehensive. And the occasional gaps do not detract from the excellence of the writing.

Charles Moore works for the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services and for the Quillen-Dishner College of Medicine Library at ETSU.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The More Things Change

Larry Bledsoe

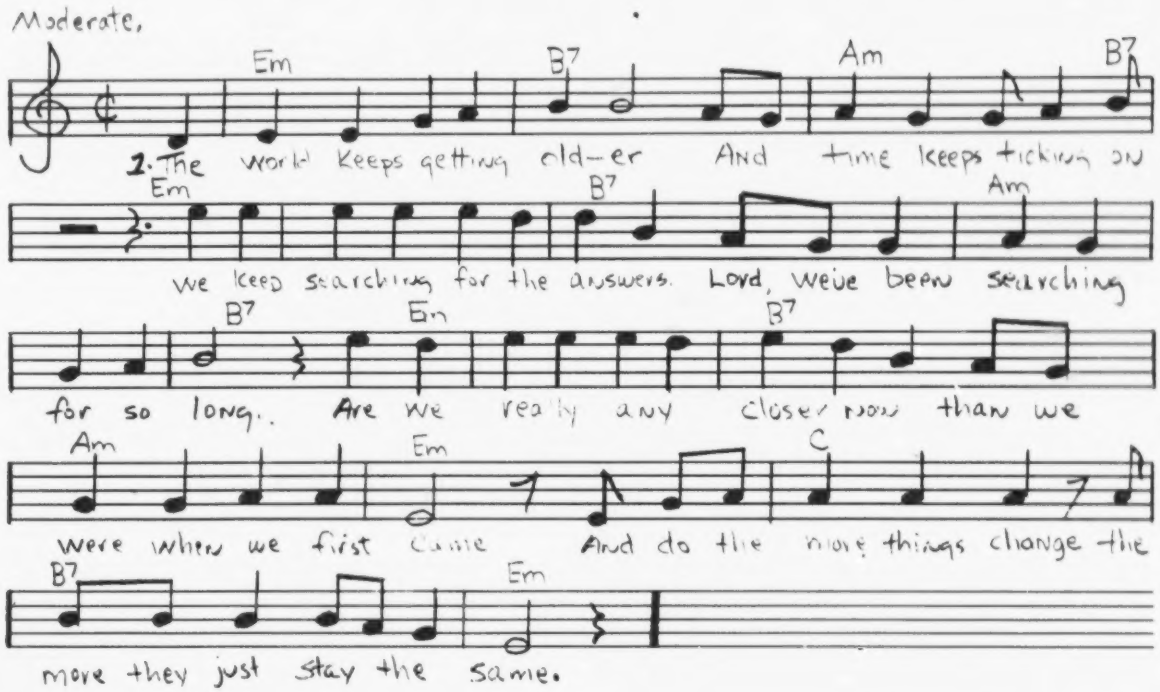
William Barnhill Collection. Courtesy of the Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives, Mars Hill College.

The more things change, the more they just stay the same, is an old saying you have heard, probably many times. Larry Bledsoe wrote this song in the early 1970s. During that time he was getting adjusted to being out of the Navy, playing music with his brother Tommy and writing songs. Talking with him today he says he was a little more cynical then; He says, "age can rub off some of those rough edges."

Tommy Bledsoe and Rich Kirby recorded "The More Things Change" on their record album **Twins,** *(Swallow Tail Records). I've heard other performers singing it, including Knoxville musician Sonny Houston. It's a song with a good melody and definitely something to think about.*

Larry Bledsoe works for the Kingsport, Tenn., fire department.

—Ed Snodderly



The More Things Change

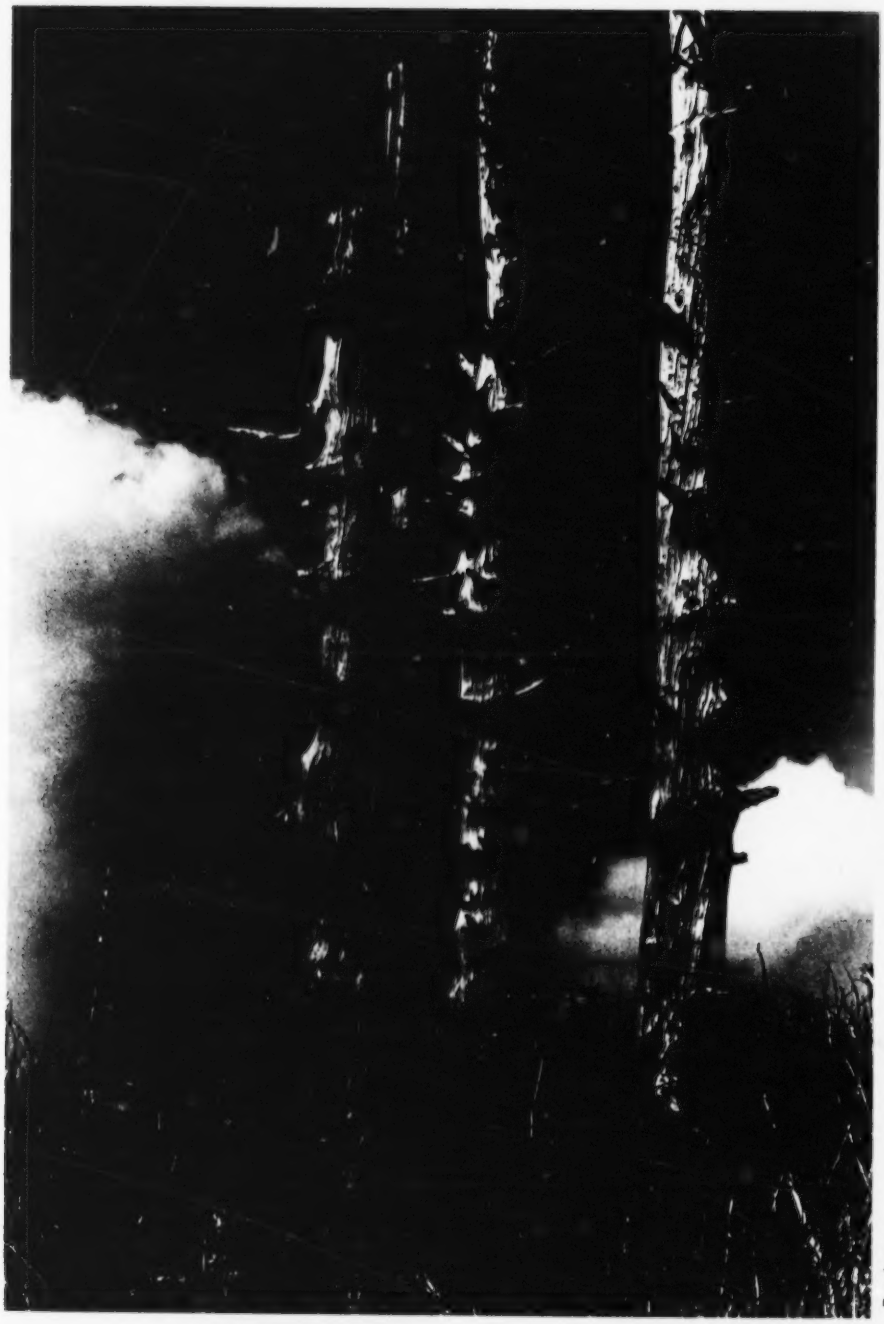
The world keeps getting older
And time keeps ticking on
We keep searching for the answers
Lord, we've been searching for so long.
Are we really any closer now
Than we were when we first came
And do the more things change
The more they just stay the same.

Eli sent the prophets
To lead the children through the night
But when the darkness lifted,
They were blinded by the light
Now they just stared out so helplessly
And it seems like a crying shame
That the more things change
The more they just stay the same.

The empire had a ruler
And Nero was his name
But he just sat there and fiddled
While the world was all a-flame
Oh Lord, I thought my heart would break
When he played that sad refrain
The more things change
The more they just stay the same.

The rich folks got the money
They can also have the blame
We could feed the world, but we'd rather
Have our rockets and jet planes
Now are we just a world of fools
Being led by the insane
And do the more things change
The more they just stay the same.

Recorded by Tom Bledsoe and Rick Kirby on the album **Twins,** *C&P, 1986, Swallow Records, P.O. Box 10, Ville Platte, La. 70586.*



Pat Arnow

The Graveyard of Trees

We move among fir trees long dead and bleached
starker than the granite they cling to, high
on the ridge scarcely below timberline.
The trees stand, leaning toward the rise and pitch
of sunlight, as they had when their branches spun
vibrant needles, devouring light. They rise
into the wind, a graveyard of bones, upright
on land they have always held, skeletons
along the trail we follow in this dream
of trees pretending not to be what they seem.

—Malcolm Glass

Malcolm Glass is a widely published poet and is co-editor of the new literary journal, ***Zone 3.*** *He directs the writing program of the Center for the Creative Arts at Austin Peay State University.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bertha Jones first heats, then strains the milk, one of the first steps in the long and laborious process that results in a variety of dairy products. Blending the old ways with the new, she now uses her refrigerator for the next phase—cooling the milk. In her youth, she remembers, the milk was cooled "in a little log spring house built over the spring." Although she has a microwave, she says she isn't a big fan. "I don't use it a lot. Just to bake potatoes and reheat coffee and sausages."

NOW AND THEN

Now and Then
Center for Appalachian Studies and Services
Box 19180A
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tenn. 37614-0002

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 194
Johnson City, Tenn.
37601

Forwarding and
Return Postage Guaranteed

COMING UP:
Health in Appalachia
Spring, 1989
Sense of Place
Summer, 1989
Arts, Folk and Fine
Fall, 1989

BEST COPY AVAILABLE